



February 5, 2024,

Chair Grayber, Vice-chairs Lewis and Tran, and members of the Committee On Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans,

For the record, my name is Christina, and I work at the state's Stabilization and Crisis Unit (SACU). I want to share my full support for HB 4045 which lowers the age of current P&F OPSRP employees from 60 to 55. It also creates a new "Hazardous" category within PERS for employees of the Oregon State Hospital who have direct contact with patients and 911 operators. This bill has various components but I want to shed light on one specific portion which directly impacts the life of my coworkers who are also your state employees.

The work we perform at SACU is unique and comes with its challenges. Patients at SACU require intense levels of care related to IDD and mental health issues. Short staffing levels leave me with little time to recharge my health and spend time with family. HB 4045 could help address these issues. In addition, by creating this new category for OSH and 911 telecommunicators, we could attract folks into the workforce who engage 24/7 in work that is high-risk and causes high stress.

I strongly urge your support and appreciate your consideration of this bill. HB 4045 would not only help recruit new people into this field, but it would also retain workers who feel burnt out. My co-workers and I have shown up through the last couple of years and the pandemic has exacerbated the staffing crisis. This bill would not only be a boost of morale, but it would also make us feel seen and heard.

Thank you for your time,

Christina