



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 Saihou Suwaneh, and I'm a member of AFSCME and work at state's Stabilization and Crisis Unit (SACU). I am writing before you today to express and urge your support for HB 4045 which lowers the age of current P&F OPSRP employees from 60 to 55.

The work we perform at SACU is unique and comes with its challenges. I work with patients with challenging behaviors and high medical needs. Due to the intense stress caused by my job, two days off a week is often not enough.

This bill also helps address the staffing shortage across the state at other places like the Oregon State Hospital by creating a new "Hazardous" category in PERS for employees of the Oregon State Hospital who have direct contact with patients; and 911 operators, allowing them to retire earlier with full benefits, as well as receive an increase in their final average salary. The work they perform is also highly critical.

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. The physical toll this occupation has on your body is taxing and people who perform critical services for the state should be able to retire earlier. Please vote aye on this important piece of legislation.

Thank you for your time,

Saihou Suwaneh