

Nancy Sánchez Koppy
Tigard, Oregon
Employment: Legal Support Staff

February 6, 2024

Dear Chair Fahey, Vice Chairs Kropf and Helfrich, Members of the Committee:

I write to you today in support of Notary Training, HB 4020, which requires training for notaries every four years. I have worked in the legal field since 1991 as a legal assistant and as a paralegal. In those years I have worked for firms large and small and in different states. Each job presents its unique mixture of legal support needs and many require staff to be notaries. As notaries in a law office, the legal support staff wears two hats: one as a person commissioned by the State to be an impartial witness and the other as legal support staff. We attend notary signings, wearing both hats, to serve clients who come typically with some level of stress and a unique set of circumstances. I want to add that to become a legal support staff, some of us have pursued formal training, others have on-the-job training but for our jobs, continuing education is imperative. To become a notary, we read one publication and take one test.

My intent in this writing is to illustrate that often times notaries are staff members who are asked to become notaries as a condition of their jobs and who take on the responsibilities with very little training or support. When a staff member moves on to a new job, they will undoubtedly face different notary-related questions. Periodic training allows the notary to focus on aspects of notarization that perhaps were irrelevant in a prior job. Maybe that staff member now works in an international law office and needs to focus on the types of identification they can accept, the technology for distance notarization, etc., aspects that perhaps when they were only notarizing in-house affidavits, they didn't need to know. The pandemic too brought change in the notary world, with electronic notarization and remote online notarization building on the traditional in-person mode.

I support HB4020 because notaries are commissioned by the State to be precise, knowledgeable, and ethical impartial witnesses for very important documents and transactions. To be able to do the job well, we need to stay on top of our skills and be able to grow with the changes. Required periodic training will prompt us to remain in the know.

Thank you very much for allowing me to share my perspective and my support for HB4020.

Sincerely,

Nancy S. Koppy