



OREGON STATE FIRE FIGHTERS COUNCIL

International Association of Fire Fighters
AFL-CIO CLC

Senator Chris Gorsek, Representative Greg Smith, members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on General Government,

I am writing to express my strong support for Oregon House Bill 5016, which provides funding for year-round staffing for elected officials in the Oregon House of Representatives and the Oregon Senate.

I believe that this bill is crucial for the effective functioning of our state legislature and the ability of our elected officials to serve their constituents. Currently, the demands of legislators extend far beyond the legislative session. They are expected to:

- **Engage with constituents:** Address concerns, answer questions, and provide assistance year-round.
- **Participate in interim committees:** Continue policy work and research between sessions.
- **Stay informed on complex issues:** Research and prepare for upcoming legislative sessions.
- **Collaborate with stakeholders:** Work with community organizations, businesses, and other groups.

The current system, with limited staffing outside of the legislative session, places a significant burden on legislators and hinders their ability to fully meet these responsibilities. This can lead to:

- **Burnout and high turnover:** Making it difficult to retain experienced and dedicated lawmakers.
- **Reduced responsiveness to constituents:** Delays in addressing constituent needs and concerns.
- **Less effective policymaking:** Limited time for thorough research and preparation.

Providing year-round staffing would address these challenges by:

- **Ensuring continuity of service:** Allowing legislators to maintain a consistent presence and connection with their constituents.



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- **Supporting in-depth policy work:** Providing the resources needed for effective research and analysis.
- **Improving constituent services:** Enabling timely and efficient responses to inquiries and requests.
- **Promoting a more sustainable legislative career:** Making the position more manageable and attracting a wider range of qualified candidates.

In conclusion, I urge you to support House Bill 5016. This is a critical investment in the capacity of our legislature and the ability of our elected officials to effectively serve the people of Oregon.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Alan Ferschweiler
Legislative Director
Oregon State Fire Fighters Council