

April 30, 2025

Co-Chairs Gorsek and Smith, and Members of the Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on General Government,

My name is Sara Kim and I have the honor of serving as Chief of Staff for the communities in House District 36. Today, I am writing in my personal capacity as legislative staff who has worked in the Legislature for the last 5 years asking for your strong support for adequate, year-round staffing positions in legislative offices.

The demands of the Legislature and the people are not part-time - constituents need support and access to essential services, policy and bill development in preparation for the next session is critical for success, and continued outreach and engagement with our district is key to our democracy.

When we lose session staff, my own workload doubles which ultimately leads to hard decisions about tasks that I need to prioritize. This ultimately means slower response times, delayed services, and less time to develop legislation. **It is not in the best interest of the public to delay these services as it could mean delayed access to unemployment benefits, legal representation, or an accumulation of overdue fines.** Our districts need us and all staff are the conduit for our communities to access our government.

And when it comes time to hire staff, I spend countless hours reviewing applications, interviewing candidates, and training new staff the tools they need - all just before the session begins. For newly onboarded Legislative Aides, many only have a few weeks leading up to session to understand a new office culture, build relationships across the building, conduct policy research, and draft communications for a member they may just be getting to know. Due to the instability of office budgets, many aides are forced to find other positions after the session because legislative budgets cannot sustain two year-round staff, meaning we have to hire and let go staff every year. **This turnover of qualified and trained staff is deeply ineffective and counterproductive for the responsibilities staff are tasked to do and the residents that we are entrusted to serve.**

We all come to the Legislature as leaders, advocates, and staff with a shared passion and a drive to serve Oregonians. It is time that we give every office the adequate staff that they need to ensure each of our offices have the capacity and staff to develop effective legislation and provide the timely and attentive services that Oregonians deserve.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration, I sincerely ask for your support for year-round staffing through HB 5016.

Best,

Sara Kim
Chief of Staff