

Co-Chair Gorsek, Co-Chair Smith, and Members of the Subcommittee on General Government,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on the Legislative Branch budget. My name is Antonio Martinez. I currently serve as a Legislative Assistant 2 in the Office of Senator Deb Patterson, and I'm writing to you today in my personal capacity.

My path to working in this building began in 2015 when I was honored to serve as a Senate Honorary Page. Since then, I have been committed to public service, believing deeply in the importance of representative and responsive government. I have always known that pursuing a career in public service would not make me wealthy. I chose this work because too often, decisions are made without a person of color in the room, and for too long, government policies have disenfranchised communities like mine.

In order for the legislature to craft good policy, it needs good staff. I don't think I need to explain to you how essential legislative staff are to the daily operations of this building. But I want to emphasize how much the current limitations on staffing during the interim undermine effective governance. Limited-duration and part-time staffing restricts the Legislature's ability to provide oversight of the Executive Branch, to respond to constituents, and to prepare for complex issues well before they arrive in session. Interim work is not optional — it's fundamental to responsible policymaking. Failing to act on this matter keeps barriers up for underrepresented persons to enter the building.

Increasing member office budgets to fund a full-time Legislative Assistant 2 during the interim would be an investment in good policy, an investment in oversight, and an investment in a Legislature that better serves **all** Oregonians.

Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,

Antonio Martinez