

Submitter: Stacy Clark

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On General Government

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5016

I am asking for an amendment to HB 5016 to support funding a year-round LA2 position for each legislative office.

This issue is not abstract to me—it is personal, daily, and unsustainable.

During session, I work 12- to 14-hour days just to keep up with the bare minimum. I arrive at the office around 6:45 a.m., stay until 6 p.m., and often log another 1–2 hours of work at home in the evenings. I rarely take a lunch or leave my desk during the day. Weekends aren't downtime either—I'm often working 4–6 hours to stay afloat. And despite all of this, there's still more to be done.

Our office cannot even afford an LA2 for admin help during sessions, much less interim. Our limited staffing budget must stretch to help cover the Water Caucus Chief of Staff, and the current legislative contribution isn't enough to employ her fully year-round, our office makes up any difference, usually 75% or more of the salary needs. As a suggested side conversation, the funding for bipartisan, bicameral caucus staff should be reviewed to be a separate portion of the S&S budget or allocation of additional funds to those host offices.

That means I am the only staff person managing a highly active and visible legislative office—handling everything from policy development to constituent casework, scheduling, communications, and more.

The result? I don't take time off. Not because I don't need it—but because I can't afford the backlog that will be waiting for me when I return. I've had to push back personal medical appointments during session because even a few hours away from my desk sends my anxiety skyrocketing, knowing my inbox will be overflowing, I will have missed important meetings without a colleague to have taken notes for me, or be behind on the stack of requests in my absence.

Even in the interim, the pressure doesn't let up. I avoid long vacations because I know I'll return to constituents who are frustrated they haven't received a response, to a to-do list that's only grown, and to a sense of guilt that I stepped away at all, or I take my laptop with me to check on emails and requests late at night or early in the morning to avoid the dismay of my family.

This is not just about me. It's about what this current staffing model costs all of us—

staff, legislators, and the Oregonians we serve. Without year-round LA2 positions, we lose continuity, burn out our most committed workers, and fall short in delivering what our communities deserve.

A year-round LA2 in every office would give me the capacity to serve the district more effectively, to engage with policy more deeply, and to take care of myself so I can keep showing up. We all want to do this work well. We just need the resources to do it sustainably. It would also allow me time to properly train additional help ahead of sessions.

Please know, I love my job, I am honored to work for the Representative and the Capital Community. I learn something new almost daily, and I am thankful each day for the ability to do this work and serve Oregon, but along with my colleagues, just need a little more help to do my job better. Thank you for your time and for considering what this investment would mean—not just for me, but for every legislative office in this building, and every Oregonian who calls us for help.