

May 1, 2025

Dear Members of the Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On General Government:

70,621 constituents. Thousands of bills. Dozens of meetings.

And after session ends—just **one** staffer left to handle it all.

That's the reality in every Oregon House Representative's office today. My name is Renée Perry, and I serve as Chief of Staff in the Oregon State Legislature for House Representative Shelly Boshart Davis, representing HD-15.

If we expect lawmakers to tackle today's toughest issues, we must give them the team it takes to do it right.

I am submitting this testimony in strong support of increasing funding to provide each legislative office with an additional full-time staff member.

As the chief aide managing the day-to-day operations of a legislative office, I see firsthand the immense and ever-growing demands placed on staff. In our office, the Member's legislative demands, leadership roles, committee assignments, and strong relationships with industry leaders, constituents, and stakeholders—especially given her deep expertise in the agricultural and transportation sectors—generate a consistently high level of engagement.

Representative Boshart Davis is not only a legislator but also a business owner. When she isn't at the Capitol, she's helping run her family's farm and trucking company. She also serves in legislative leadership and is a Vice Chair of a key committee. These additional roles further increase the workload and expectations placed on our office. The complexity of her responsibilities—both in and out of session—requires a level of staff support that goes well beyond what one full-time aide can sustainably provide during the interim.

Currently, during the interim, that single staffer is expected to manage everything: policy research, constituent services, communications, scheduling, community engagement, and coordination with local and state agencies. No matter how capable or committed, one person cannot meet these **expectations without making tradeoffs in quality, timeliness, or effectiveness.**

Adding a second full-time staff member, full-term, would allow offices to divide responsibilities more strategically, respond to constituents more efficiently, and better prepare for policy work. It would help maintain the continuity, institutional knowledge, and responsiveness our communities deserve.

The consequences of inadequate staffing ripple outward. Constituents face delays. Outreach efforts stall. **Communities go underserved. Staff burnout increases, and with it, turnover and loss of experience. During crises like wildfires, floods, or public health emergencies, the burden on a one-person staff becomes overwhelming.** Offices must choose between responding to immediate constituent needs or staying current with legislative developments—an unfair and unsustainable choice.

Losing our second staffer during the interim also halts critical follow-up, planning, and community engagement. The work doesn't stop after sine die—but without that second person, our capacity is cut in half when it's needed most.

This is a modest investment within the scope of the state budget, but one with outsized returns: more effective constituent service, stronger policy support, and improved public trust in the legislative process.

Ultimately, this isn't just about internal capacity—it's about **equity, access, and ensuring that every Oregonian, in every district, has a responsive, well-functioning legislative office they can count on.**

I respectfully urge your support for this important funding.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Renée Perry', with a stylized, flowing script.

Renée Perry
Chief of Staff to Representative Shelly Boshart Davis
Oregon House District 15