

TRAVIS NELSON
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
HOUSE DISTRICT 44
NORTH/NORTHEAST PORTLAND



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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

For the record my name is Travis Nelson, and I represent House District 44, N and NE Portland.

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. I want to begin by acknowledging the important work of all the staff in this building who make this institution run, from the committee staff to the Legislative Aids, Chiefs of Staff and everyone who supports our collective work behind the scenes.

As a part-time professional legislator, most members must balance this role with outside employment, like I do. During the interim, that balance means I rely heavily on my one staff member to keep constituent services running and to track complex policy developments in advance of session. My particular district is one of high engagement, with active constituents, neighborhood leaders, and issue-focused stakeholders regularly reaching out. That's a good thing, but it comes with real workload implications.

Currently, my office is staffed by a Chief of Staff who is near the top of the pay scale. She is deeply experienced, capable, and a tremendous asset for the office. However, because of that very experience, she is expected to do more with less. This is a structure that punishes competence. It's not just unsustainable, it is unfair. Additionally, retaining a Legislative Assistant year-round is critical to maintaining the capacity needed to serve our constituents effectively, ensure continuity between sessions, and build the expertise required to meet the growing demands in our district.

I support the staff in this building, and I know many of my colleagues do as well. We want to retain and empower talent, not burn it out. We want to serve our constituents effectively, not just during session, but year-round. So, I'm not here today to make demands, but to ask for partnership in addressing this problem. I am here to ask legislative leadership and this committee to work with staff and members to find solutions that adequately staff, member offices so we can better serve our constituents.

We talk often in this building about supporting workers. But that commitment must extend to the people who work inside these walls, and to the staff who carry the weight of our offices year-round, 365 days a year – because our districts needs do not end on Sine Die. If we're serious about public service, then we need to be serious about staffing as a matter of democratic function.

I welcome the opportunity to stay in dialogue as this conversation continues.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Travis Nelson'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'Travis' being more prominent than the last name 'Nelson'.

State Representative Travis Nelson
House District 44, North/NE Portland