

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

My name is Bryn Thomas. Until February of this year, I had the honor of serving as Chief of Staff for Senate District 18. I acted as Chief of Staff in that office for five years and worked as a Legislative Aide and Legislative Intern in another office for two years before that. I write today as someone who worked in the Capitol Building for seven consecutive years, from the lowest position in a legislative office to the highest, to **express strong support for the funding of two full-time and year-round legislative staff positions in each legislative office.**

Providing funding to employ only one full-time, year-round staff Chief of Staff or Legislative Director and one seasonal Legislative aide is not adequate and is **not in the best interest of our constituents, our districts, the elected officials we serve, or our own health and wellbeing.**

I have seen countless talented Legislative Aides leave the Oregon Capitol and not return, simply because the work cycle was not consistent enough to offer them financial stability. I have seen countless talented Chiefs of Staff and Legislative Directors leave work as a staff member because they were overwhelmed and burnt out from managing the work of an entire legislative district on their own when there is not enough budget for a second staff member. **Even in the interim, there is too much work to be completed by one person alone.** Chiefs of Staff are unable to perform their jobs to the best of their abilities without support.

The constant turnover of employees also wastes resources in recruiting applicants, conducting hiring processes, onboarding new employees, and creating transition plans for each new hiring cycle.

The departure of these staff members takes an immeasurable toll on the institutional knowledge, skill, and culture of trust in the building. If we supported Legislative Staff and made it possible to stay in the building long-term, the state of Oregon would be better served. **The Oregon Capitol should be a highly desired place to have a career, instead of a burdensome launching point to another position that provides reasonable supports and expectations.** Legislative Staff deserve better, you as legislators deserve better, and Oregon deserves better.

I urge you to support the allocation of funding to support two year-round, full-time staff members for each office.

Thank you.

Bryn Thomas
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