

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

My name is Zeke Adler and I have had the privilege of serving as a Legislative Assistant (LA) in the Oregon State Legislature. Due to the lack of year-round staffing opportunities, I have been hired back three separate times, each time after being let go in the interim due to budget constraints.

This cycle has had real consequences. Each time I am let go, I lose insurance coverage, financial stability, and momentum in my work. Each time I return, I face the challenge of relearning systems, catching up on evolving policy conversations, and trying to regain the institutional knowledge that was lost. I am unable to operate at my highest proficiency immediately, which means my office, my district, and ultimately the constituents experience delays and disruptions in service. No matter how dedicated I am, it takes time to rebuild the rhythm and expertise needed to serve at the level the people of Oregon deserve. If we truly value excellence within the legislature and in our state, we must begin to ask ourselves, what is the hidden cost of allowing institutional knowledge to slip through our fingers year after year?

Year-round LAs would change that. With stable staffing, legislative offices would operate at a higher level of excellence while also producing faster results, more thoroughly thought-out policy, and more efficient service to every Oregonian. A legislature with year-round staff would be a well-oiled machine, capable of delivering thoughtful, timely, and effective governance.

I respectfully ask legislative leadership and this committee to find solutions that adequately staff member offices so we can better serve the unique needs of our constituents. LA positions is an investment in the strength, efficiency, and integrity of Oregon's democracy.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Zekiel Adler

Legislative Aid to Representative Travis Nelson