

My name is Sang Tzun Phan, and I formerly served as Chief of Staff in the Oregon Legislature. I am writing to express my strong support for **year-round Legislative Assistant 2 (LA2)** positions across all legislative offices.

During my time as Chief of Staff, I've experienced firsthand how stretched legislative offices can be—especially outside of session. Having a year-round LA2 would have been a game changer. It would have allowed me to dedicate more time to policy development and strategic work, rather than splitting attention between managing casework, scheduling, and administrative logistics. The added capacity would have also enabled more consistent engagement with constituents—something that's vital to good governance, but often falls by the wayside due to limited staffing.

Timely Constituent Services

The need for constituent support has dramatically increased over the last decade. In one legislative office, the average constituent casework load has nearly doubled. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, that demand has only grown, both in volume and in urgency. People across Oregon have realized they can turn to their legislative offices for real help, whether that's navigating state agencies or resolving time-sensitive issues. Without year-round support staff, we simply can't meet those needs promptly—or equitably.

Effective Governance and Policy Development

Too often, interim policy work is rushed or delayed due to lack of staffing. With only one full-time staff member, it's incredibly difficult to lay the groundwork for thoughtful, well-vetted legislation. This frequently results in bills that need major amending during session, which burdens committee staff, Legislative Counsel, and members themselves. In some cases, gaps in bill clarity mean greater discretion is left to agencies during implementation—leading to outcomes that may deviate from legislative intent. A year-round LA2 would provide vital policy support to get things right *before* session begins.

District Outreach and Legislative Access

Constituents deserve accessible representation year-round. But with only one interim staffer, even scheduling in-district meetings or attending local events becomes a logistical hurdle. With additional staff capacity, legislative offices could maintain meaningful district outreach throughout the year—building stronger relationships between legislators and the communities they serve.

As a **citizen legislature**, Oregon relies on members who have careers and family commitments outside their elected roles. Year-round LA2 positions would help balance those realities by ensuring consistent staff support regardless of the time of year.

Institutional Stability and Equity

This issue also speaks to the sustainability of our staffing model. When jobs are seasonal, we lose qualified people just as they gain the experience to be truly effective. Offices are then forced to retrain new staff every few months—at a cost to both efficiency and institutional knowledge. Year-round positions reduce burnout, allow for basic things like time off for medical needs, and provide a more stable and professional path for public service careers.

Temporary jobs also create unnecessary barriers for those without a financial safety net. By making entry-level positions like LA2 year-round, we open the door to a more diverse workforce that better reflects the state of Oregon. Equity starts with access, and access starts with stable jobs.

In closing, a year-round Legislative Assistant 2 position isn't a luxury—it's a necessity. It strengthens governance, supports legislative members, and most importantly, ensures we can serve Oregonians with the attention, timeliness, and care they deserve.

Thank you for your consideration and for your commitment to a stronger, more responsive legislature.

Sincerely,