

Committee: Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on General Government

RE: HB 5016

Dear Co-Chairs Gorsek and Smith and Members of the Committee:

The following testimony is from my experience as an intern during the 2022 Legislative Session and as LA2 and LA3 during the 2023 Legislative Session and interim, and does not reflect the views of my employer.

Please support funding for year-round staffing through HB 5016. I had the honor of working for my then elected official in 2023 after interning for him during 2022's session. I was proud of the work I was able to do to help pass meaningful legislation and support our constituents through my thoughtful handling of their casework to get them the help they needed. However, the entire duration of my employment was burdened with a thick layer of stress due to the fact that my job was limited duration. I felt pressure to not only do my current job well, but attempt to find a new job at the same time.

Institutional knowledge gets lost with the high turnover. Constituents suffer with inconsistent levels of staffing. Relationships and trust are built over time. I know I made an impact with constituents by not only helping connect them to the correct people to get their unemployment claims addressed, or receive their tax returns, but also by listening and providing them a place in their own process that is hard to understand and access from the outside. Providing the funding to support full-time year-round staffing benefits all of Oregon.

High turnover of qualified and knowledgeable staff squanders talented people who truly care about this work. Because of the lack of funding to support year-round staff, great employees are forced to try to find outside work in the interim, or patchwork together random funding streams to stay doing the work to serve Oregonians. I would have loved to stay working in the Legislature, but I have a family that requires stable employment. Please help retain the great public servants currently supporting offices and Oregonians.

Thank you for your consideration and all the work you do.

Respectfully,

Clare Lanusse