

TO: Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Services  
FROM: Vanessa Herriott  
DATE: March 28, 2013  
RE: SB 5529, APD

My name is Vanessa Herriott, and I am a Case Worker with APD in Jackson County. I work at the Medford Disability Services office. I process applications for Medicaid programs such as the Oregon Health Plan Plus, Employed Persons with Disabilities, Qualified Medicare beneficiary program which help pay for their Medicare premiums, Presumptive Medicaid which is when a client is requesting a disability decision through the State to receive Medicaid. I also process application for Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program benefits, formerly known as Food Stamps.

Many of my clients are severely handicapped; many have severe disabilities ranging from Mental to Developmental and Physical. Some are dually diagnosed. My most severely handicapped clients live in Adult Foster homes, Group Care homes and Transition homes. Many of my clients live alone and some in questionable conditions. Some of my clients are veterans with many mental and physical disabilities.

I currently have 708 cases; I have deadlines that I must follow for each program. A combination application, which includes Nutritional Assistance Program benefits and Oregon Health Plan benefits is completed for every case once a year. Out of these cases, clients who are employed have a mandatory report due at the six month mark of their certification year. Our in offices processes, have mandated timelines when processing applications; 40 minutes for single program applications to be processed, multiple program applications get 75 minutes (1 hour 15 minutes) and the 6 month report is expected to be processed in less than 20 minutes. I have 24 hours to return all calls, which is nearly impossible at an average of 30 calls per day.

In a year I have 1,976 work hours available. I am required to make myself available to my clients during regular business hours. With this size caseload, I have an allotted time average of 2.37 hours (2 hours 22 minutes) total, per person over the course of a year. After processing the mandatory forms I have a total of 52 minutes per person a year to address their other needs.

What this means for my clients, is that I will not always be able to get their basic needs met. Which for a person on a fixed income of \$786.00 per month, with a rent of \$191.00 a monthly average utility bill of \$150.00, mounting medical bills, car payment, car insurance and other bills; the services they receive from the State are essential to their survival.

Many of my clients do not have family around to help. We, State of Oregon case workers, have become their family, their friend, their supporter, and we take this role very seriously Cutting staffing will only lessen the 52 minutes I have in a year to meet clients' miscellaneous needs. I already believe that 52 limited minutes of my time is unfair to our

clients. I ask that as you weight the budget options, you find a way to prioritize staffing within in DHS. Our senior and physically disabled clients deserve such an investment.