

Dear Senators,

I wish I could be there today to talk with you about SB 470. I appreciate your time in reading my testimony:

I've worked for my school district for 20 years in several capacities. Currently I reach, teach and supervise upwards of 600 students a day. I run the library, instruct students in keyboarding and supervise recess, mealtimes and dismissal. My job is busy. My job is skilled. My job makes a positive impact. My job is hard. My job...goes away for 45 days a year and I have absolutely no control over it.

I am a "classified" employee (workers in a school who are not licensed teachers.) Unemployment insurance is taken out of my pay each month but I do not qualify for unemployment insurance when I am out of work. My classification stands alone. Everyone else qualifies, but not us.

In the past I have been fortunate enough to land the coveted summer school positions that run in June and August for a few weeks, but those have now all but gone away. They are now ran by afterschool programs like SUN and they use their own year-round employees. Other employers would like to hire me, but after training me and doing all the paperwork on me, they need me to commit to working longer than the summer. High school and college students rightfully get the true "summer jobs."

We (the classified) qualify for public assistance and many of us have to apply. A fellow employee told me the clerk at the family services office was shocked that someone who worked full time for a school could get food stamps. She told me she was very embarrassed and teared up, but her kids needed food. Another colleague has run up credit cards to buy food and gas during summer months and over the years the interest she paid on them is staggering. I have two friends- one works for Centennial school district where the food service is run by the school and she cannot collect unemployment. My other friend works for Gresham Barlow schools and they contract out their food service to Sodexo - she CAN collect unemployment! These scenarios are not right.

My particular school district tries to 'help' by withholding my pay and spreading it out over 12 months so I get three checks in June. But all this does is make my checks so small I barely bring home \$1000 a month for working 33 hours a week!

I suppose "classified" employees, in the scheme of things, are a very small group of people. But we are asking you to please do a very small thing and allow us the same assurances that loggers, school bus drivers, cafeteria workers, fisherman and other jobs get which is - The opportunity to collect unemployment insurance IF we need it during lay off periods. Please, please pass SB 470.

Sincerely,

Sue Krueger