



Service Employees International Union, Local 503, OPEU

From the Desk
of
Rep. Evans

VOTE YES ON HB 3391

Protect Child Welfare workers from harassment and stalking

Over the past several years, the DHS has seen an increase in the both the number and the severity of threats made against state workers, specifically Child Welfare workers.

One worker shared her personal story during the public hearing, detailing years of chronic stress and anxiety related to being stalked and harassed by a former client. This former client came to her home and tracked her down in public threatening to harm her and her child. She was forced to navigate the judicial system on her own without the support of her employer. After nearly four years of dealing with this trauma, she decided to move hundreds of miles away to a new town to escape the harassment. Her story is just one of many stressing the need for this legislation.

HB3391 will allow Child Welfare workers to get the support of DHS and the Attorney General's office if they are faced with harassment in the course of their work. The Attorney General's Office will be able to obtain protective orders on behalf of the employee after all other resources and procedures have been exhausted.

HB 3391 also contains a task force component which would look best practices for keeping child welfare employees and their families safe from unwanted and harmful threats. The task force will also make recommendations regarding the need to expanding the practices to employees in other offices or divisions within the DHS.

DHS Child Welfare workers are tasked with keeping children safe and, if necessary, removing them from harmful home environments. These workers go into unsafe, emotionally charged situations, often without back up, to respond to reports of children in danger. They need to know that DHS and the AG's office are able to assist them should they need it as a result of the work they do.

HB 3911 passed out of the House Committee on Human Services and Housing unanimously. We ask for your support on this legislation.

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