

Reading testimony from Wednesday 26th it occurred to me that the committee may like to hear from someone like myself. I am providing this information as a private individual, but because of my most recent employment, I have an understanding of the State unemployment insurance system as well. In no way am I authorized to speak for the entire OED, and I offer these thoughts in the context of my personal private experience, and with the level of understanding I have gained over these last six weeks.

I am a new state employee, in the first draft of 70 that were hired specifically for the roll out of the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program that covers the self-employed, gig workers and those who are not otherwise eligible to Regular/UI: the program provided for in the Cares Act.

I do feel that in many ways, Mr Lane mischaracterized the simplicity of working from home. It has been my experience from day one, 20th of April, that great care was taken to ensure social distancing was easy, not something you had to fight to obtain. I am not aware of any state employee who has contracted covid-19, but given the numbers, there has to be a few, but even then, there is no guarantee they contracted it at work. I believe that sufficient measures were taken to minimize the risk.

In my opinion the risks posed by working from home, far outweigh the small risk to personnel by not doing so.

Mr Lane was right in that, it is technically a simple matter to allow state employees to work from home, but the associated risk involved make it imprudent.

The mainframe For the Oregon Employment Department contains the personal data for a majority of Oregonians. Data like ssn#, dob, addresses, employer and income information, all of the things you would need to steal someone's unemployment check, or their identity.

Employees are hard wired into the network at work, similar to a teller at the bank. Both industries use COBOL, an old computer language, but one that is extremely efficient at handling large amounts of data, in real time. Over the last couple of decades the banks have invested in security, which has allowed them to let some key workers access accounts from home. This is by no means everyone, and it is more common at smaller institutions with few employees. It is simple to train a few employees quickly, but the scale of the access Mr Lane was proposing would be riddled with risk. With the number of employees involved with such a proposal, the statistical risk of a person making a mistake becomes almost a certainty. That would be all it might take, to expose of all the data in the State's system, one person making a simple mistake. We must also consider the exacerbating factor, the speed at which the shift to working remotely would have to take place.

As I said at the start, I work in the new Pandemic Unemployment Assistance Program.

Congress passed the CARES ACT on Friday 03/27/20 and it went into effect Sunday 03/29/20. I applied for my job 11 days later on 04/09/20. During those 7 business day, a basic understanding of the program had to be fleshed out, and a general idea about the types of job that were needed had to be established, and people to do all that needed to be allocated from other work. Job descriptions based of that understanding had to be created, and the positions advertised. I had a preemployment orientation meeting on the Monday of 04/13/20 were I submitted references and consented to background checks. I was offered the job on Friday, and started work the next Monday 20th April. OED Staff completed reference and background checks for over 70 people in under three days. At the same time they were building offices to house the influx of new employees, and doing so in a manner designed to keep us safe. It's a lot of work in a very short time. Simultaneously other OED employees were developing the training that we would receive, based on a process design that was created overnight. Yes, mistakes were made; some more foreseeable than others. I will state clearly that were I in charge of the program, the choices made would have been very different, but I also say that with the experience of hindsight. It really would not have mattered if the governor had or did give OED advanced notice of her executive orders. The problem is that unless they lead time was

more than three months, the speed with which the program had to be implemented forced these mistakes. The early mistakes were inevitable, but unimportant, it is more important to manage that change, it doesn't help to fixate on the errors. Everything is fixable in that process, but the lack of ability to prepare continues to create delay. In short, things got messed up, but they can be fixed. Applying the same pace to Mr Lane's proposal would similarly have created more errors, but unlike the PUA program, errors made in the roll-out of "work from home" may not have been fixable after. We all know about the ransoms campaigns which have plagued local authorities in recent years. Would anyone thank us if, we had done that to our State? I just can not imagine, that rational people would feel like it was worth the risk.

While I understand that Mr. Lane and others may have felt safer working from home, as a resident of Oregon I am glad that they couldn't: it is my data, after all, that they would jeopardize.

Now, I chose to apply, to work at this time, I knew what I was getting into, and the risks associated with it. The same is not true for Mr Lane. When hired, I was asked to be flexible. It is often the case that employees are asked to be flexible, and treated as an expectation at all times.

In this instance perhaps management could have been more flexible in this exceptional circumstance. From existing employees like Mr Lane, perhaps they could have solicited volunteers, so that no one who truly felt unsafe would have to work, but at the same time you need the people in the seats because otherwise the problem would be worse. Choice is a powerful thing, and the lack of it appears to have created ill feeling.

I am not in an authoritative role at OED, I didn't want you to misunderstand me and assume that somehow I was. I am at the lowest rung in the department. I am just someone who knew that it would need help, and applied in order to provide that assistance. I do have extensive executive level experience, and a lot of time in the private sector as a manager of people and things. I just felt that there was a lot of fuss being created over something so easily remedied. The delays in unemployment, or PUA compensation are not so easily fixed.

I am not a citizen, and have discovered over the last 20 years, that the only way I get my representation, is when I put it forward myself. I apologize for the lack of structure in this email, it probably makes it hard to read, but I wrote it on my iPhone, and never anticipated it would be this long. Next time, I will definitely get to a computer, and try to make your job easy.

Thanks