

Chairs Nosse and Beyer, members of the committee,

For the record my name is Annelle Hicks, and I am an SEIU 503 member. I am a Human Services Assistant II/Counselor Assistant at Vocational Rehab here in Salem. I have spent my whole adult life working in public service. I got my start working in an adult group home, then went to the Oregon State Hospital, and then 1.5 years ago I came to Voc Rehab.

A typical day for me as a Counselor Assistant is defined by the need to be flexible and welcome to distractions – whether it's a VRC asking a question or having me complete a task. I do enjoy having that client contact when I can and would like to connect more with our clients. We have Vocational Rehab Counselors who have caseloads over a 100 and who will stay late and work the night shift as we call it.

If we had even two more VRC's it would lessen the load on the VRC and they would be better able to connect to their clients and better serve clients. Our VRC's could leave work and they would have a better work/home life situation.

The work that my colleagues and I do is important to the people we serve, and it's a critical part of Oregon's social safety net. I am asking you to do everything you can to ensure that we are able to continue to provide these services, and not make any further cuts that increase our workloads and hurt our consumers.

Thank you for your time, and for your commitment to this issue.

Annelle M Hicks  
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