

Chairs Nosse and Beyer, members of the committee,

My name is Wendy Stott. I am a Child Protective Services Worker from Beaverton, and I am an SEIU 503 member. I've been doing this job for almost two years, and while I cannot honestly say that I love or even like it every day, I can say that I find both comfort and pride in knowing I'm doing my best in my little corner of the world to make life better for others.

No two days are the same for me. While I may sit in the same middle school conference room, every child I speak to has their own story and every family has its own background and circumstances which make them unique and worth consideration.

A day for me might include speaking with a domestic violence survivor and connecting her with resources to help her family find safety or drawing with a 6-year-old while she tells me that someone touched her in a way she didn't like. It may even include removing a child from her home in order to ensure her safety.

This isn't the type of work that just anyone can do. We need the ability to retain excellent talent so that our clients are treated compassionately and equitably. Having more workers would mean smaller caseloads, which would give us more time to work with our clients and provide them the quality service they need and deserve to live safe and healthy lives.

In addition, smaller caseloads mean less stress to the workforce—who, as you can only imagine, are quite stressed as it is. Making workloads more manageable would go a long way toward retaining excellent staff.

Turnover in our line of work is overwhelming and training new workers in a never-ending cycle ends up costing more to the taxpayers and ultimately hurts Oregon families, who deserve well-trained and experienced workers.

The agency needs to be staffed to achieve the workload model and the workload model needs to take into account the increasing complexity of this job. Please, do your part, in your corner of the world, to make life better for others.

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

Wendy Stott

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