

Chair Salinas, members of the committee:

My name is Thomas Taylor. I am a state employee and have been for nearly 16 years. I am here to testify in support of HB 3075.

When I started working for the state, I was 19 years old. I was always told one thing by other friends and coworkers and that was "The State has great benefits. That's a great place to work." Since SB 1067 became law I have been actively reaching out to explain how terrible this bill is. When I began state service in 2002 my wife and I have had deal with the ever decline in those great benefits. Furlough days, freezes, little to no cost of living increases, and paying a portion of our health care have all contributed to this. I must admit I am beyond upset and greatly displeased by this current situation. Now, with SB 1067 current law, my family will lose medical benefits only because my wife and I work for the same employer.

My wife and I were married in March of 2011. Before that time, we each had our own healthcare as we both work for the State. She has a daughter from a previous marriage and then we gave birth to our son in March of 2012. Without the double coverage that we get through the State I don't know where we would be today. That coverage was there for the birth of my son. Allows my wife and I to go to our doctors' appointments without having to pay most copays. Prescriptions, even with the copays going up, were almost always covered. It has been a huge incentive for us to continue to work for the State. Especially considering we could likely make more in take home pay in the private sector. My son also suffers from asthma and, thankfully, with our double coverage we don't have to worry about the cost of his inhalers or his breathing treatments.

I think it's also important to note that the term "double coverage" is misleading. I say this because it's not the same coverage that I get with my primary. It's treated more like a secondary coverage and is significantly reduced from the primary. That said, it's still leaps and bounds better than it would be without it and it's something my family has come to depend on. Even with both of our coverages my wife and I still invest into the Flexible spending account and put aside \$1200/year to cover the rest of our deductibles and copays. It adds up very quickly and it's nice knowing that we don't have to worry about these things.

The idea that if two state workers already are or choose to get married will lose out on health care coverage is inherently unfair. If both spouses work for the State, and both pay premiums, then both workers should each be afforded the benefits as such. You do not see a practice like this in the private sector.

Since the passage of SB 1067 I have spoken with PEBB and my legislators and not only have they told me that this "cost containment bill" will not save any money, it actually will cost the places like PEBB more money to implement. That, in addition to what will be shouldered on the back of state workers families like mine. With my testimony today I have also included a correspondence I had with Representative Denyc Boles. In the email she reached out and confirmed that I and many other state workers will see an increase in costs. Please help my family by approving HB 3075.

Thank you for taking the time to hear my story.