

TO: House Human Services Committee
RE: House Bill 3191
ON: March 19, 2019

Chair Keny Guyer, vice chairs Noble and Sanchez, 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 am here in support of House Bill 3191.

No two days of work are the same for me. Every child I speak to has their own story and every family I work with has its own background and circumstances which make them unique. And each is worthy of appropriate time and consideration.

Every client we engage deserves to be treated compassionately and equitably. Caseload caps would mean smaller caseloads, which would give us more time to work with our clients and provide them with the quality service they need and deserve to live safe and healthy lives.

In addition, smaller caseloads would mean less stress to the workforce. And I can tell you from personal experience, we are under quite enough stress as it is. The workload model says a CPS worker should get 6.85 new investigations per month on average. I would say I have recently been averaging about 12 new investigations per month, and during times of low staffing—like last summer, when we operated half-staffed for months—it's been much more. In Hillsboro, our other Washington County office, some workers got 18 new investigations assigned last month. Last Friday, 16 new investigations were assigned to my unit. We currently have 15 workers taking cases.

Making workloads manageable would go a long way toward retaining excellent staff. Turnover in our line of work is overwhelming—we always have at least a couple vacancies or a couple workers going through introductory training—and training new workers in a never-ending cycle ends up costing more to the taxpayers and ultimately hurts Oregon families, who deserve a well-trained and experienced workforce.

The agency needs caseload caps. It's what's best for our colleagues, our clients, the taxpayers, and our communities. I urge you to vote YES on House Bill 3191.

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

Wendy Stott

Social Service Specialist 1, Beaverton