

From: [Erin Donnithorne](#)
To: [JWMCC Exhibits](#)
Cc: paul@paulevans.org
Subject: SB 1049
Date: Wednesday, May 15, 2019 8:15:47 AM

TO: Joint Committee on Ways & Means, Capital Construction
RE: Senate Bill 1049
ON: May 15, 2019

Co-Chairs Holvey and Girod, members of the committee,

My name is Erin Donnithorne, and I am a Training and Development Specialist for Disability Determination Services with the Department of Human Services in Salem. My office makes medical eligibility decisions for Social Security disability, and I have been employed here (and with the state) since 2006. I am deeply committed to my job, as I see on a daily basis how my agency impacts Oregonians. Most recently, I have been in a job rotation as a Disability Hearings Officer, which allowed me to meet with Oregonians appealing their cessation of Social Security benefits. In meeting people face-to-face, I can see the direct impact of my job on people's lives. It is incredibly rewarding and important work. Over my last 12.5 years of employment, I have considered leaving the state for the private industry, simply because of the paycheck and benefits. I have two sisters who work in private industry (one in Oregon, one in Australia), who have better salary and benefit packages than I do. Don't get me wrong, I am not saying that state employees have a bad deal. However, with my experience level, it is undeniable that I could make more money with similar or better benefit packages if I left the state. What has kept me working for the state is the fact that I like what I do and I see it is as valuable. I know that I can and do make a difference in the lives of the claimants I serve everyday.

That being said, I do think I should be fairly compensated for my work. SB 1049 harms my retirement security by making unaffordable cuts to my individual account program. According to analysis from PERS, if this bill passes, my IAP would be cut by over 7%. I was hired after OPSRP was created and am not the cause of the state's pension debt. It is fundamentally unfair for you to ask me to take a significant cut in benefits to pay a debt that has nothing to do with me. Add to that the fact that I, and state employees like me, have agreed to lower salaries over the years to protect our benefits. This current proposal is a betrayal of our past agreements. That includes the Tier 1 and 2 employees as well, since the state also made them promises in regards to their retirement.

If this bill passes, I strongly believe that will impact Oregon's ability to retain a skilled workforce, let alone recruit new members. I ask you: if the day comes when you or one of your family members needs to apply for benefits, like Social Security disability, food stamps, TANF, etc, who do you want processing that claim? Do you want someone who is informed in policy and dedicated to making the right decision in a timely fashion? If so, then vote no on SB 1049.

Thank you,

Erin Donnithorne

Sent from my iPhone