

Testimony in Support of HB 2266

Submitted by Joe Baessler Associate Director Oregon AFSCME

Chair Salinas and members of the committee, Oregon AFSCME support HB 2266. Our members that are covered by the Public Employees Benefit Board (PEBB) and the Oregon Educators Benefit Board (OEBB) feel that a benefit was stripped away from them based on who they were married too and that it was unfair. We also know now that the savings from this reduction of benefits had no actual savings for the state. We ask that you pass HB 3075 to stop the benefit reduction from taking place and make sure you are not allowing married spouse that are both employed by the state or a school district to lose their spousal coverage and the double coverage for their children.

We believe that elimination of double coverage was done without enough thought and certainly without enough comment. In 2017 the provision that eliminated double coverage was added to SB 1067 there was no hearing and no members had the opportunity to talk about the impact on their lives. We were not given the opportunity to challenge the assumed saving it would bring. Savings, which OEBB and PEBB have said is almost non-existent. The first group of members that sounded the alarm bells within AFSCME were a group of parents with medically fragile children that needed the double coverage to cover the intense cost of their child's medical care. There is also a strong sense of unfairness among other members who depending on where their spouse works can still use their insurance to cover them. Regardless of how little it is used it still impacts some families and their budgets and they were not allowed any input or a fair hearings.

We hope that in light of the support of HB 2266 from both employees and employers and the increase in cost that are associated with the elimination of double coverage you will pass HB 2266 and stop the elimination before it takes effect. Even though this impacts a small group of members it is a priority for all of our State workers and they ask you to vote yes on HB 2266.

Respectfully Submitted

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