

Chair Dexter, members of the committee,

For the record, my name is Casey Kolb, I'm a member of SEIU Local 503, and I work at the North Salem DMV field office. I have worked for the DMV for over 16 years. I love my job, and I know that it's important to keeping our state going during COVID. Frontline state workers are essential workers, and we deserve to be safe at work; unfortunately many of us are not. I am submitting this letter to you to share what my experience has been as a frontline state worker throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

I work as a Transportation Service Representative 2 Commercial Drive Examiner. I work daily in front of the public performing the normal duties at the counter serving our diverse clientele. As a TSR2 I have additional duties which include being called upon by my coworkers to help with their customers when needed. I conduct Class C drive tests and the drive tests for customers in our At-Risk program along with the Commercial Driver Skills tests. I travel to work in other field offices in the state when asked.

In 2020 I had a health issue unrelated to Covid-19 that put me at higher risk if I contracted Covid-19. In September my doctor requested that I work in a safe environment with no public contact or I should be considered disabled. I was at home because of the office closures during the wild fires, when the DMV Human Resources representative called me and told me I was able to stay home for 80 hours of Covid relief time, then I would need to use my own leave or be in leave without pay. If I could not do my required duties for my job description I would be asked to resign. The DMV HR department asked the different service groups within the DMV to see if there was work I could do from home. I was told by the HR representative that there was no work from home opportunities. During the first half of 2020 I was working on a special project that allowed me to work from home. I was part of a training team that trained all of the field office staff to use our new computer system. We used the same technologies as school districts are using now for distance learning. After the system roll out I worked what we called desk side support where I answered technical support questions over the phone and computer, from home. Surgery has corrected my health issue and I have returned to work in the field, I still have underlying conditions that cause me to be considered high risk. I fear Covid-19 and I am worried about the carefree behavior and practices I see each day at the DMV.

The first point of contact we have with customers is at the front door. The customers approach and DMV representative greets them and asks if they have an appointment. These customers do not always have a mask on. If they have an appointment we check them off and send them in. If they do not have an appointment we answer questions and determine what they need to do. We supply them with forms and information for them to mail in to complete what they need done or have ready for their appointment. These interactions may not take very long but we are usually closer than 6 feet when talking to these customers and again they do not always have a mask on. We don't check our customers' temperatures or ask Covid-19 questions before they enter the building. We provide masks for customers who do not have masks, but they do not always have them on correctly. The quality or design of the masks customers wear are not always what you would consider acceptable (lace, beaded, or thin see through fabric). The customer must remove the mask for us to take their photo. The photo area for this is not really protected very well, the computer terminal, camera and key pad are outside of the plastic screen. We are conducting drive tests which requires a DMV representative to enter into the customers vehicle and perform a road skills test lasting about 20 min. The length of the drive tests vary by location because of the roads and traffic. We use a plastic cover that covers part of the seat and we have on a plastic poncho, gloves and a mask.

As a CDL examiner I am in the cab of a truck or bus with an applicant for an hour or more. Many of these trucks are the living quarters of the driver or multiple people. I consider all surfaces that I contact as possible exposure points. The plastic poncho, gloves, mask and plastic seat cover are not enough. When we are finished with the drive test any part of my body and clothing not covered by the plastic should be considered as exposed. I go back into the field office, remove the gloves and poncho then go back to working the counter serving customers. Everything that touches an exposed area is now potentially contaminated. This is very difficult for me because I do not want to take home the virus, I don't want to expose my wife, my daughter, my two granddaughters ages 4 and 1, or my elderly mother 77 who cares for a disabled grandchild. I was very frustrated and felt betrayed that educators have been moved up in line for the vaccine when they had not even been scheduled to have in person classes. Yet we have asked all of the DMV employees who do not qualify for leave (Federal Covid relief or their own) to put their lives in danger daily. Other frontline employees (medical professionals, police, and fire) have been offered the vaccine. Many DMV headquarters employees are being allowed to work from home during this time, field employees are not being offered this opportunity. As you may also know DMV has a large back log of mailed in work that people are working overtime each week to try to catch up on. Just a note, at the DMV we serve everyone.

Thank you for having this hearing and for taking my testimony.

Sincerely  
Casey Kolb  
Salem