

Co-Chairs Nosse and Lieber, members of the committee,

For the record my name is Felicia Martinez, and I am a member of SEIU Local 503. I work at the Oregon State Hospital as a social worker, I have worked at OSH for about 2 years. I am here today to provide a frontline worker perspective as you consider the budget for the Oregon State Hospital, and to ask you not to make cuts to our staffing.

I want to start by telling you about what it's like to work at OSH right now, as we navigate a global pandemic. We are currently, and have been for months, under an emergency staffing plan. Due to large numbers of staff absences on a daily basis, staff are being asked to perform work outside of their regular job in order to cover needed staff positions on the floor. I am one of those staff. As I mentioned, I work at OSH as a social worker. I'm currently working to get my clinical license, and that requires a certain number of clinical hours, as well as supervision by someone who is already licensed. Because of staffing shortages, I've been assigned to work on the floor performing the duties of a Mental Health Therapy Technician (MHT). Now, instead of performing my job and working toward licensure in social work, I am working as an MHT Tuesday through Friday on the overnight or NOC shift. Recently I was approved to work Mondays on just clinical work. Because of this, my ability to achieve licensure has been pushed back by three months, to July, because it will take me longer only working one day a week to reach my hours. I'm just one person, so many others are being impacted by staffing challenges.

It's also not just about doing a job you aren't prepared or adequately trained for and the personal impacts of that, it's also about how this impacts staff and patient safety and their overall care. We are a year into this pandemic, and our staff are working in a 24-hour high-security psychiatric facility, with the threat of COVID every day. People are experiencing anxiety, fear for their family, personal challenges with child care and scheduling, and a general feeling of overwhelm. People are not being trained, they aren't being supported. It all falls on the backs of the floor staff to seek, establish, and preserve their own safety. If lucky, they can achieve collective safety.

We talk about staff stepping up to help, people doing this work because they love it and rising to the occasion. But that's not really the entire story. Doing this work because we love it and rising to the occasion, are not considerations or opportunities afforded to those who were mandated to the floors. Given the opportunity to exhaust our leave, inappropriately use CXT time, or leave all together; those were our opportunities. Of all the opportunities I have been given to step up and help at the OSH, this was not one. I'm not stepping up to help, I am being mandated to help. This has been an exhausting year with the pandemic, for everyone. The need to add additional stressors or risks to personal safety is utterly devastating. Staff are not seeing the positives of the current state of our staffing crisis. Take the recent ice storms as an example - staff were dealing with their own personal challenges of not having power, water, and more. But because we are in such a dire situation with staffing, they were still mandated to stay at work, and leave their families to fend alone. We are left with few options as staff; we can either derail our own personal lives and health and schedules and volunteer to help, or we can be mandated and be treated poorly. Morale is incredibly low right now. I love the people I work with, and the work I

do, but the whole system is broken, and I am exhausted. The expectations are insurmountable. We are expected to come back day after day, with no time to rest or cope with the circumstances of COVID, of injuries or traumatic events. The system is abusive. It doesn't consider the people that are in it. It's easy to lose sight of the humans keeping the flow going, when business is seen as the paramount need. Right now, it feels like we are solely business and we are not recovering like machines.