

Chair Power and Members of the Committee,

Hello. My name is Kim Blaser. I have been a SPED Educational Assistant in Life Skills with Eugene School District 4J since 2006. Life Skills is a very intense, primarily self-contained program working with kids with a range of academic, behavior, medical, and/or physical needs. I am an employee all year round but do not work as many hours during the summer and during breaks when students are out.

In December 2019, I needed to take Unpaid Leave through the OFLA Act to care for my father who had just been discharged from a long term stay in the hospital. His Dr's reported to my employer that it was critical he have 24/7 care for at least the next several months after his discharge. Despite the fact that I had been an employee since 2006 I was denied OFLA because at that point in the school year I had not worked an average of 25 hours per week. Because I was denied the unpaid job-protected leave that OFLA is supposed to provide I had to return to work earlier than the 12 week provision. I had to return earlier than I needed to protect my insurance from being my responsibility to pay for. I did not have enough sick leave time to cover the duration of the absence I requested.

I am a long-time employee that has dedicated my life to serving students. However, because of the nature of my work and the school year, I couldn't get the leave I needed to care for my dad who needed 24 hour care.

Please support HB 2474 so that the thousands of Oregon workers like myself - those that work full time but may not hit the average 25 hours per week at points can access OFLA.

Thank you.

Kimberly Blaser