

Submitter: Jennifer Cranmer
On Behalf Of: Public Employees
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure: SB5506

Hello, I am Jennifer Cranmer, I have worked for ODHS for over 11 years, with Child Welfare and Self Sufficiency programs. I am here to ask that you support Governor Kotek's initiative to support the public employee workforce. Retention is a big deal, because if we retain staff, we need to do less hiring which is incredibly expensive and time consuming, additionally hiring managers report all of the time they can't get applicants. We really should be looking at why that position was vacant? According to the data of our exit surveys ODHS staff are leaving for promotional opportunities. What can we do to make our jobs more appealing for more folks to want to stay? and if hiring is needed, make it desirable? These are the questions we need to be asking. Hiring bonuses don't retain employees, let's make the jobs desirable without a hiring incentive and support the longevity of staff.

I would like to speak to the amazing service public employees provide to fellow Oregonians, all be it with challenges. In Child Welfare not only do caseworkers have high caseloads, resulting in the ripple effect to all other staff. On top of that we have an extreme crisis with Temporary Lodging, where staff are being physically assaulted by our youth often, including during transportation. In SSP we have had an incredible backlog of work, since rolling out the ONE system, a system that is still undergoing modifications in order to work for us the way we need it to. We have angry clients calling in and coming into offices threatening staff on a daily. In ODOT we have folks working all hours of the day and also in unsafe situations, including but not limited to cleaning up roads after a storm or accident, and homeless camps as reported by many media outlets, which comes with a whole different safety risk. We have DMV trying to get caught up from the pandemic that limited access to their services, and the Employment Department rolling out a new program, Paid Leave Oregon, these are just a few examples I have off hand.

There is so much Public Employees continue to do and did through the pandemic when our communities needed us the most, we were there and still continue to be. With the transition to Workday for payroll, and the issues we are experiencing, we have staff experiencing homelessness and eligible for our own services. This is unacceptable for our staff who live paycheck to paycheck, some in debt struggling to survive. Why do we not want better for our employees who show up everyday in undesirable circumstances and tell them they are already overpaid. This is incredibly disheartening to hear coming from people making decisions about our income, job duties and expectations, who make more annually than our staff do. We are experiencing inflation and rising costs of daily living too, we are Oregonians also.