



February 5, 2024,

Chair Grayber, Vice-chairs Lewis and Tran, and members of the Committee On Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans,

For the record, my name is Josh, and I'm a member of AFSCME, working in the Oregon Department of Corrections (ODOC). I am writing to express and urge your support for HB 4045 which lowers the age of current P&F OPSRP employees from 60 to 55 and creates a new "Hazardous" category within PERS for employees of the Oregon State Hospital who have direct contact with patients and 911 operators. This bill has various components but I want to shed light on one specific portion which directly impacts the life of my coworkers who are also your state employees.

Counseling inmates for 40 hours a week results in a high-stress work environment that requires hypervigilance. It's a struggle every day. Trying to impact inmates and truly work to reduce recidivism is very taxing. It takes you to deep places. The negative work environment also forces people to become very negative and hard to work with. Our jobs are not easy and without many incentives, I can see why recruitment is difficult. HB 4045 help with these efforts.

I strongly urge your support and appreciate your consideration of this bill. HB 4045 would not only help recruit new people into this field but also retain workers who have dedicated their careers for public service.

Thank you for your time,

Josh