

Testimony IN OPPOSITION to HB 2391
Before the House Committee on Commerce, Labor, and Economic Development
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Chairman Hutton and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. My name is Laura Calhoun and I have worked for the Department of Corrections for over eighteen years. Today I am speaking to you as a private citizen, and not as a representative of any state agency. As a long-term state employee, I am asking you to vote against HB 2391.

Shared Leave

Shared leave is difficult to get. It is only available to those who have used all of their paid leave and are still unable to return to work, due to their own serious condition or the serious condition of a family member. Two things have to happen for an employee to receive shared leave. First, the shared leave committee must grant the employee shared leave. Second, other employees must donate leave to that employee. The leave we earn is our leave, it is our benefit. If we want to donate that benefit to another employee, who might otherwise have to leave employment, that should be our decision. The state already has trouble filling open positions. Why would we want to make it more difficult to retain a good employee who is simply needing time away from work to deal with their own health condition or that of a family member?

Longevity Pay

I am a longevity-eligible employee. Over the past several years, I have seen my pay reduced by increased health insurance costs and increased pension costs. Neither of these has been offset by a pay increase. I depend on my longevity bonus. Making it anything less than a guarantee cuts my pay and devalues both the work I do for the state and my over eighteen years of service.

The Classified System

The classified system makes sure all of us in the same position are on equal footing. Morale in my workplace is already bad. Creating a system where we could all be paid different amounts based on favoritism, the old-boy network, or any other non-job related factor would only make it worse. I am a woman working in a man's field. I work hard, and I do a good job. However, without the classified system it is possible I would be paid far less than a man in my same position.

Overall, these changes do not do anything positive for me or my co-workers. I urge you to vote against HB 2391.