



## **TESTIMONY**

*Rachel Kriege, Administrative Division Director*

Senate State and Local Government

March 14, 2025

Good Morning Madam Chair and members of the State and Local Government Committee. For the record, my name is Rachel Kriege and I serve as the Administrative Division Director for the Insurance Department, which part of my role is also Human Resources. We are in support of House Bill 1170.

HB 1170 would allow agencies the flexibility to grant new employees a predetermined amount of time off upon hire, providing immediate benefits that can significantly enhance recruitment.

Currently, new hires in state employment start with no leave balance. This system can be a deterrent for potential employees, especially those who may be transitioning from the private sector, where paid time off is often part of the overall compensation package from day one. By offering some leave, upon hire, we can better compete for top talent and reduce barriers for those considering state employment. This small adjustment would help align state employment with industry standards and make our positions more attractive to skilled candidates.

In competitive job markets, particularly within specialized fields such as insurance, candidates frequently evaluate the overall benefits of a position—paid time off being a key consideration—alongside other factors like salary and work-life balance. A recent example occurred in early February within the Insurance Department, where we extended a competitive salary offer to a highly qualified candidate. After discussing the benefits package, the candidate ultimately declined the offer. The primary reason for this decision was the absence of paid leave at the start of employment. Given the candidate's specific personal circumstances, starting with a zero-leave balance raised concerns, as they needed immediate time off availability for unforeseen personal matters.

Offering a leave package from the outset provides new hires with essential flexibility to manage personal needs, thereby fostering a supportive work environment from day one and enhancing employee satisfaction and retention.

Madam Chair and members of the committee, that concludes my testimony and urge a do pass recommendation.