

Greetings Council,

I'd first like to start by expressing my gratitude to each and every one of you for your continued service to our community in the role that you serve. Second, I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Ordinance 22-008 relating to military employee service. I'd like to specifically thank Council Member Nehring for your active role in this ordinance. As many of you are aware, this journey to support our county employed service members started in March of 2021. On July 21, 2021, this council so graciously stood in support of our service members and passed an ordinance to provide Reservist Differential Pay to mobilized service members that were employed by Snohomish County at the time of mobilization. I stood before this council to deliver my testimony and expressed that the ordinance was the first step of many to relieve financial strain on our service members while deployed. I recall that every council member was in favor of the ordinance and specifically recall one council member calling for action on behalf of private businesses to enact similar policies to help support our service members.

The ordinance presented before you today is the next step in our continued support of our service members while mobilized. In my July testimony I informed the council I was scheduled to be involuntarily mobilized in December 2021. I'm not able to be present for this testimony as I was indeed mobilized December 2021. During my testimony I also disclosed that my family would experience a financial hardship to the tune of approximately \$20,000 for the year. To some that dollar figure may seem nominal; however, with recent world events in Ukraine causing financial pressures on multiple markets and the effects of Covid-19, that dollar figure is exacerbated. Fuel prices continue to rise, property taxes continue to rise, and costs of goods such as wood make the cost of maintaining a home increase. I'm sure many of you have experienced these same examples. My question is how many of your incomes have been reduced by \$10,000, \$20,000, or more?

I'm sensitive to the differing roles within the county governance structure; Prosecuting Attorney's Office, County Executive's Office, Sheriff's Office, County Council, etc. I've served on many board of directors and continue to serve others; I'm an advocate of being a good steward of funds. Currently in Ukraine millions of families have left home, fleeing to safer areas in fear of their lives. Contrarily, thousands of U.S. service members are going towards the danger in countries bordering Ukraine; many of those service members being reservist that were mobilized. This stark reality is a present example of the sacrifice service members give to support the Constitution and protect our freedoms. Freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of movement, and freedom to vote. We as service members are willing to give our lives for these freedoms for people we don't know, have never met, and will likely never see. The question is not is this a gift of public funds. The question is are we doing enough for our service members and their families who are still employed by the county and protecting our freedoms abroad?

Spouses and children constantly have lingering questions: When is the next time I'll see them? Will they make it out alive? When is the next time I'll hear their voice to know they are okay? A question families should not have to ask is, where am I going to get more money from to cover the cost of loss income? By standing in support of and adopting ordinance 22-008, this council can make a difference and ensure families don't have that concern while also worrying about the welfare of their mobilized family member. Thank you for your time today.