

From: Campbell, Michael
Sent: 3/25/2014 10:01:05 AM
To: Dietz, Sidney (/O=PG&E/OU=Corporate/cn=Recipients/cn=SBD4)
Cc:
Bcc:
Subject: FW: ORA alternate schedule policies

FYI

From: Campbell, Michael
Sent: Tuesday, March 25, 2014 9:22 AM
To: Serizawa, Linda
Cc: Campbell, Michael; Lukins, Chloe
Subject: Re: ORA alternate schedule policies

Who the heck is Stacey Hunter, and why does she think anyone wants to read her personal essay?

On Mar 25, 2014, at 9:11 AM, "Serizawa, Linda" <linda.serizawa@cpuc.ca.gov> wrote:

From: Hunter, Stacey
Sent: Monday, March 24, 2014 4:48 PM
To: Como, Joe
Cc: Serizawa, Linda; Pocta, Robert M.; Burns, Truman L.; Wuehler, James R.
Subject: ORA alternate schedule policies

Dear Joe,

It has come to my attention that ORA has been losing female employees for significant periods of time on maternity leave because ORA management has not been willing to accommodate alternative work schedules for them. Women who planned to return to work after a couple of months are staying out on unpaid leave for much longer, up to the year allowed under the Family Medical Leave Act, because their only alternative in ORA is to return to work full time. Others may have chosen not to return to work at all. As a woman and a mother,

this concerns me. More importantly, as an employee of ORA, this concerns me.

When each of my children was born, I returned to work as soon as I was medically cleared by my midwife. Staying home longer was simply not an option; my husband is a stay-at-home parent, and I am the sole support of our family. Returning to work after having a baby is a very hard thing to do, physically, mentally, emotionally, and logistically. (I'm happy to elaborate on this in case you aren't familiar with, or have happily forgotten with the passage of time, the changes a baby brings to one's life.) A good employer should make it easier for new moms to return to work, not harder. For me, the one thing that made returning to work less of a burden was my alternative schedule. I worked a half-time schedule for the first two weeks, which allowed my family and me a chance to transition to our new normal. (My original plan was to return for six weeks at half time, but my overdue babies and need for surgical deliveries kept me out longer and used up my accrued leave.) This very reasonable, and temporary, schedule change was not only approved by my supervisors, it was encouraged and supported by them, and by Dana Appling.

The same principle applies to employees with other family issues. Because of the interconnectedness of our work, when someone takes off a significant amount of time on short notice, unlike with a planned maternity leave, their vacancy often leaves work for the rest of us to pick up. Why is ORA forcing employees to take unpaid FMLA leave for weeks or months rather than allowing an extra telecommute day or one unpaid leave day per week for that same period of time to accommodate the need to care for a family member? Most of us who have been granted such flexibility in the past have worked just as hard as when we are in the office full time. Most of us really do want to take as little time off as possible, not just because of finances, but also because we value the work that we do here in ORA and we don't enjoy putting our work off onto others.

I understand that ORA management claims to be looking at these situations on a case-by-case basis, and considering whether the situation is "acute" or whether it has the potential to become a permanent change. I have to tell you, from an outside-of-management "rank & file" perspective, it seems all of them are being denied. No one is aware of any new mom in the past few years who has been granted an alternative work schedule to facilitate her return to work. No one is aware of any employee in the past year who has been granted an alternative work schedule to accommodate a temporary need to care for a family member. But almost everyone is aware of people who have asked, and been denied, and who chose to stay home, usually unpaid, to care for themselves or for loved ones. There is also a rumor floating around that the new "zero based budgeting" is at fault but I'm not sure I believe that; someone who is budgeted as a full-time employee but who works 80% or 50% for a few weeks would save budget money in one year, and could still be budgeted as a full-time employee the next year because they *would* be a full-time employee. This is actually one area where zero based budgeting is better than incremental budgeting!

I want to encourage ORA management to consider the impact on other employees when an employee is forced to take off more time than they want to, or really need to take. And I want to encourage ORA management to consider a return to the more family-friendly policies that supported me and my family in our challenging days, and that could really make a difference to other employees and other families. Thank you for your time in reading this.

Respectfully,

Stacey Hunter