

Testimony of Gloria O'Brien in support of SB 113

February 17, 2015

Good afternoon, my name is Gloria O'Brien, and I am a Bio Science Research Tech 3 at Oregon State University working with students in the growing of plant material. I am from Blodgett, Oregon, and I am a member of SEIU Local 503. I am here today to testify in favor of SB 113.

For some years, the union has been concerned that there are too many supervisors and too few frontline classified staff in our state's public institutions of higher education. Where I work at OSU, for example, we have always had two supervisors and two classified staff, and I supervise two student workers. For some time, we have worked with the legislature to address the issue of staffing ratios. In the 2013 Legislative Session – then-Representative Michael Dembrow worked with faculty, staff and students to craft HB 2152. This began the process of requiring Public Higher Ed Institutions to report numbers of employees - by community college and university campus - on an annual basis. These numbers include faculty; supervisors; classified and non-classified workers in relation to numbers of students. Ultimately, staffing ratios should be established in higher education similar to those established in regular state service. Senate Bill 113 would provide the Legislature with more of the data it needs to assess the staffing ratio problem and formulate better solutions.

We have a couple of suggestions for improving this bill. The mention of supervisory employees should refer to the definition of this term in ORS 243.650 (23). We also suggest that it be clarified that "management staff" refers to "managerial non-supervisory staff."

These are relatively minor issues. We are committed to improving the staffing ratios in higher education, and SB 113 is an important step continuing Oregon in that direction.