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TO: Co-Chair Roblan
Co-Chair Smith Warner
Co-Vice Chair Knopp
Co-Vice Chair Smith
Members of the Joint Committee on Student Success

FR: Alma Raya, Legislative Specialist, Oregon AFL-CIO

RE: Support of the Student Success Act, HB 2019

The Oregon AFL-CIO represents 300,000 working families across the state, including teachers, mentors, councilors and health care providers who have witnessed firsthand the underfunding of schools and the damage it has done to their students. A high quality of education has a direct impact in job prospects and is a priority for every working parent to ensure their children have better living and working conditions. We are proud to support this historic investment in our schools and urge you to vote yes on the Student Success Act.

Oregon schools are in crisis due to decades of disinvestment, we believe our students and communities need an increase of funding to give kids smaller class sizes, more individual attention, mental health supports through school counselors, and programs like career-technical education, music and physical education. The lack of investment in our public schools affects both the education and the health and wellbeing of our students. Our students and our communities depend on legislators to allocate the funding that allows our educators to provide the education we know our students need. One specific part of the system that we are particularly concerned about is the fact that underfunding disproportionately affects low income students and students of color. As of right now, about one in three low-income students do not graduate and around 160,000 students are food insecure. We need to prove to ourselves and our children that no matter what type of income our parents have, everyone deserves the same support and resources. With more funding, we can spend more time ensuring that these students are supported in order to help them graduate on time and get the training they need to access post-secondary educational opportunities and good employment.

Thank you for your consideration, please support the Student Success Act and help Oregon's children and youth thrive in their future.