



February 3, 2020

Chair Doherty, Vice Chair Alonso Leon, Vice Chair Helt, and members of the committee:

My name is Taylor Sarman, and I am happy to provide testimony in support of HB 4160 on behalf of AFT-Oregon. AFT-Oregon represents over 22,000 workers in Oregon's higher education and K-12 system.

While AFT-Oregon's sole legislative priority in the 2020 session is the passage of legislation to provide health care for part time faculty, we view HB 4160 as an important piece of legislation that will help inform a conversation about higher education funding in the 2021 Legislative Session.

AFT Oregon has recently started participating in Representative Alonso Leon's stakeholder convening to receive feedback for HB 4160, and we thank the bill sponsor for her work in bringing this issue before the Oregon Legislature in 2020. We have been happy to participate in the conversations that have helped craft the bill before the committee and the forthcoming amendments, which will include language that allows the task force to receive feedback from postsecondary education stakeholders including students, faculty, and staff.

This language is important because it will allow the task force to hear directly from underrepresented students about the challenges they face, and also from the staff and faculty who work tirelessly to provide support to students on campuses across Oregon. Addressing disparities in postsecondary education attainment will require large structural change, and we appreciate that HB 4160 is a vital first step in eliminating education inequities for students.

HB 4160, with the inclusion of postsecondary education stakeholder engagement, will not only be vital in helping to address the inequities that we know persist for underrepresented students, but also provide an opportunity to elevate the voices and stories that are necessary to provide meaningful policy solutions for the Oregon Legislature to consider.

AFT-Oregon is happy to support HB 4160 and ask for your support of this legislation.