



April 26, 2021

Chair Holvey, Vice Chairs Grayber & Bonham, and Members of the Committee:

For the record, my name is Jaime Rodriguez and I am the President of AFT-Oregon.

On behalf of the over 16,000 workers AFT-Oregon represents in our state's universities, community colleges, and K-12 schools, I thank you for the opportunity to **share AFT-Oregon's strong support for SB 496A and SB 496**. These bills are particularly important pieces of legislation for the classified staff at the Hillsboro, Scappoose, and Grant School Districts, which AFT-Oregon has the honor of representing.

As this committee is well aware, the global COVID-19 pandemic has exposed many of the challenges and inequities faced by Oregonians. SB 496A and SB 495 are both necessary public policy solutions that will go a long way in helping to remove yet another barrier that food service and other workers in our schools face when trying to access unemployment benefits.

For so many of these school employees, they are already working multiple jobs just to get by and the pandemic has only exacerbated the challenges their families are facing. The Legislature can, and must, remove these unfair unemployment restrictions for these vital workers, who overwhelmingly are women and people of color, and are serving students in our schools.

On behalf of AFT-Oregon and our members, I urge your aye vote on SB 496A & SB 495. Thank you.