



Oregon School Employees Association

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April 30, 2021

House Committee on Rules
Rep. Barbara Smith Warner, Chair

Dear Chair Smith Warner and members of the committee:

The Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA) represents more than 22,000 workers in nearly all levels of public education, including Head Start programs, K-12 school districts, ESDs and community colleges. OSEA members perform many of the thankless tasks that keep Oregon public schools safe and functional for students, administrators and teachers.

OSEA took an early interest in House Bill (HB) 2001, because we care deeply both about the quality of public education and the importance of collective bargaining in all Oregon workplaces. Many of our members are educational assistants who work very closely with both students and teachers, and they see first-hand the importance of quality relationships in the educational process. Many of those members aspire to be or are already pursuing licensure as future teachers. We often see this among our members that come from historically disadvantaged communities who need to work to help pay for their path to becoming a teacher. We also know that the protections of a collective bargaining agreement and the support of their union siblings have helped to keep some of Oregon's current educators of color in the education workforce.

OSEA was not allowed to participate in the workgroup that developed amendments to HB 2001. We understand this to be because the bill is meant to deal with very narrow circumstances and that there is no "slippery slope" argument to be made, even though it is a fact of life for classified school employees that what is applied to the certified staff bargaining unit today will be coming to classified tomorrow. There would be *extensive* problems with attempting to apply a concept like HB 2001 to classified employees, so we are happy to hear that this should not be seen as precedent-setting.

We absolutely share the broad concern among educators that our current education workforce is not representative of our communities and students. It's one of the reasons that classified employees - already significantly more diverse than higher-paid educators - have pressed to have a serious and comprehensive conversation about career pathways in the education sector. We know that recruitment and retention are very serious problems for educators of color at all levels, and we look forward to working with the Legislature to do more to address those and other facets of the critically important workforce challenge before us.

OSEA appreciates the legislative interest in grappling with the serious challenge of building the future education workforce we need, and we look forward to addressing that priority in partnership.

Thank you for your attention,

Bob Estabrook
Government Relations Specialist