



# Service Employees International Union, Local 503, OPEU

May 5, 2021

Chair Alonso León; Vice Chairs Neron and Weber; and House Education Committee members Hudson, Owens, Reardon, Ruiz, Brock Smith, Sollman, and Wright:

**SEIU 503 supports SB 712 – The HECC Voting Rights Bill.** SB 712 extends voting rights to the existing Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) positions for students, faculty, and non-faculty higher education staff, and creates just one new position to extend much-needed representation to graduate students.

SEIU represents about 4,500 workers on the seven public university campuses. Our classified members on university campuses maintain grounds and campus spaces; support libraries; IT; health services; nutrition and academic programs in most of the non-teaching and non-management positions on campus. We see higher education issues from a unique vantage point – and we believe that students, faculty, and non-faculty higher education staff should have an equal voice in the HECC’s decisions about higher education policy, funding, oversight, and accountability.

Granting these existing HECC members the right to vote will bring much needed fairness and representation for over 200,000 students, faculty, and staff to the decisions made by the commission. Their voice and real life experience on our campuses will lead to better outcomes for Oregon’s higher education system and the students and families its designed to serve.

It is time for the Legislature to grant balance within this critical commission. The students, faculty and staff that sit on the HECC have a demonstrable track record of objective, constructive and credible feedback. They are not self-interested or biased – the advice they provide is that of lived experience and a vision for the future. Their feedback and visionary expertise should be expressed in the form of a vote.

Thank you for consideration of this measure.

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