

Joe Baessler Testimony for SB 5528

Co-Chair Frederick and Co-Chair McClain and members of the committee Oregon AFSCME supports the budget request for Oregon Health Science University. Oregon AFSCME represents over 7000 workers at OHSU and it is our largest employer. There are always challenges between employees and employers when the institution is as huge and complex as OHSU. We have always had a good working relationship to address issues and problems that have arisen. The pandemic has made things very hard for our members at OHSU to put it mildly. Our members continued to work at the hospital and university through the pandemic and lockdowns. While many applauded the work of nurses and doctors which they should, many of the other workers like respiratory therapists or food service workers were in just as much danger. We had a rough start due to the unprecedented nature of the pandemic but we worked hard with OHSU to protect all the workers. We still have work to do at OHSU and are fighting every day to ensure that OHSU lives their values but we believe they are trying.

The value that OHSU brings to Oregon is very much worth the investment that the State makes there. The services that are funded by the State at OHSU are hugely important to the citizens of Oregon. Our members see the impacts of these services every day and while they are a small part of all the work OHSU does they are indispensable. The three schools that are funded by the state are essential to create the healthcare workers of the future. It is hard to imagine the importance of the Child Development and Rehabilitation center for the families that need it to help their children. These services are an investment the state can be proud of.

Respectfully Submitted;

Joe Baessler
Associate Director
Oregon AFSCME