

Thank you Chair Alonso Leon, Vice Chair Weber, Vice Chair Neron, and members of the committee for having me here today. My name is Alisha Chavez (she, her, ella) and I am a 6th year K-2 Intensive Skills classroom teacher in Portland Public Schools and proud member of the Portland Association of Teachers.

I am here today to strongly urge you to oppose HB2001. While, I fully agree with the intention of retaining Black, Indigenous, and Educators of Color. This bill has language that will harm our communities directly.

As one of the few educators of color in a self-contained special education class, in this bill it will change the language to get rid of seniority and replace with "merit" instead. Seniority has played a significant role in keeping me in the classroom with my students. Under the current bill language, an educator who might be fluent in French which is not a language used in my position would be able to bump me as they have more "merit" than me. I am a Chicana/Biracial educator with intergenerational trauma and I am not fluent Spanish speaker. But I play a huge role in representing my students and families in my school in Spanish Dual Language Immersion program.

Educators like myself are frequently advocating for a voice at the table when making decisions that will impact our schools. This bill is no different. We should be change makers for our students together and not apart. Sit with Black, Indigenous and Educators of Color and revise or eliminate this bill by listening to us on what we need rather than making decisions that will cause harm.

This bill only upholds the white supremacy that exists in our schools. We need to look at the bigger picture and truly understand and change the root causes that are pushing Educators of Color to leave the education field or even get into education when we are cutting programs like Portland Teachers Program. It is so important to retain and recruit Educators of Color and 100% it should be a priority but it needs to be done correctly. We need to address the systemic issues not have this ineffective stamp of saying we are doing the work. We must do the hard work to address this at a systemic level rather than just cause more harm to the communities you are trying to protect. Thank you.