



Service Employees International Union – Oregon State Council
6401 SE Foster ▪ Portland, OR 97206

February 24, 2021

Dear Chair Patterson and Members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Katie Shriver, and I represent the SEIU Oregon State Council. I am here to express support for SCR 12 and SB 428.

SEIU is an organization of 85,000 working Oregonians who are represented by our Union. Our mission is to achieve a higher standard of living for our members, their families, and their dependents by elevating their social conditions and by striving to create a more just society. We approach healthcare policy from the perspectives of our members, who include care workers, hospital workers, airport workers, security workers, and public workers. We specifically focus on eliminating racial disparities in health outcomes and creating a health care system that works for BIPOC communities, women, LGBTQ+ communities, immigrants, and low income people.

For many years SEIU has advocated for affordable, quality healthcare for all at the state and national levels. Our work is guided by the conviction that regular access to quality health care is not just a privilege for those who can comfortably afford it, but a right for all. If access is limited, people who are economically disadvantaged will desperately need care, and their health issues will dangerously worsen, driving up the cost of health care for all since neglected conditions require more intensive and prolonged treatment than if they are addressed at earlier stages.

The COVID-19 pandemic, which has disproportionately affected BIPOC people in Oregon and beyond, has made the importance of universal access to healthcare even more clear. To quote an April 2020 article in the *New England Journal of Medicine* by Jaime King, J.D., Ph.D., “the patchwork way we govern and pay for health care is unraveling in this time of crisis, leaving millions of people vulnerable and requiring swift, coordinated political action to ensure access to affordable care.”

SEIU strongly supports both SB 428 and SJR 12, which would move Oregon toward universal health care access. SB 428 would extend the sunset for the Task Force on Universal Health Care, allowing additional time needed to complete its work due to disruption from the COVID-19 pandemic. SJR 12 proposes an amendment to the Oregon Constitution establishing the obligation of the state to ensure that every resident has access to cost-effective, clinically appropriate and affordable health care.

Please vote yes on both SB 428 and SJR 12.