



Date: February 2, 2021
To: Senate Labor and Business, Chair Riley and Members
From: Jared Mason-Gere, Oregon Education Association Government Relations
RE: *Support for SB 495*

The Oregon Education Association, representing 41,000 member educators across the state urges passage of SB 495.

The Covid-19 pandemic has exposed many weaknesses in state statutes designed to protect working people across Oregon. The inability to respond properly to the spate of layoffs and unemployment claims throughout the past year is one key exhibit in the case for improved unemployment benefits and clarity in the law to ensure that all eligible workers can get the benefits they need in dire economic times such as these.

SB 495 aims to address confusion around the designation of some classified school staff who may be mislabeled as “instructional” staff, thus rendering them ineligible for unemployment insurance benefits, even though they would qualify under all other cases. This bill will create a clear definition to insure that employees are not unfairly prevented from receiving hard-earned benefits that would otherwise prevent themselves and their families from weathering difficult economic times.

We urge your support for SB 495.