



Service Employees International Union – Oregon State Council

February 7, 2022

Dear Chair Patterson, Vice-Chair Kennemer, and Members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Katie Shriver, and I represent the SEIU Oregon State Council. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of SB 1538.

SEIU is a very diverse union representing 85,000 workers in Oregon and Southwest Washington. We represent many workers from Palau, Micronesia and the Marshall Islands who work at low-wage jobs for subcontractors at the Port of Portland airport and who qualify for healthcare coverage through Oregon's COFA Premium Assistance Program. These workers are transporters, ramp agents, baggage handlers, airline janitors and fuelers. Health care is just out of reach for many of these workers given their hourly wages. In addition, SEIU's COFA workers at the airport are among the frontline workers in our state who have continued to work throughout the COVID pandemic, risking contracting the virus in order to keep our community moving and provide for their families.

Over the past few years, the state and federal governments have made significant changes in increasing access to healthcare for COFA communities. SB 1538 will help fill in gaps where some members still do not have access to dental services.

Dental health is a critical component of overall health and impacts much more than an individual's teeth. This bill will provide dental care to low-income citizens of Pacific Island countries with Compacts of Free Association who reside in Oregon and lack access to affordable dental care because they do not qualify for Medicaid.

Please support SB 1538.