

Testimony on in Support of HB 2573

Chris Hewitt

January 25, 2023

Chair Holvey and Members of the House Business & Labor Committee,

On behalf of the over 4,000 members of the Oregon & Southern Idaho District Council of Laborers, I write to urge your support for House Bill 2573. LIUNA's membership includes a range of professional public employees in areas throughout the state who provide critical services that help support our communities as well as maintain essential systems and spaces.

The Oregon Public Employee Collective Bargaining Act (PECBA) affirms the rights of employees to organize and form unions through a framework that supports meaningful communication amongst workers' organizations and employers to aid in encouraging harmonious relationships throughout our state's public employment settings. Currently, physical authorization cards with signatures are required to petition the Employment Relations Board in seeking labor representation. The changes that HB 2573 proposes would help modernize this process by allowing the option for electronic employee signatures to demonstrate interest in forming a union. This would importantly align the process of forming a public sector union with the private sector, which already permits the use of electronic signatures on authorization cards under the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA).

This change would also serve to better reflect the continuing post-pandemic realities of many of today's modern workplaces, with remote work remaining commonplace for many workers, as well as the diffuse nature inherent to some work settings that can stem from the demands of varied employment responsibilities and schedules. These can present as more challenging structural barriers for workers seeking to form a union under the current requirement of submitting sufficient physical authorization cards within a certain time frame.

HB 2573 is an important and common-sense update to the current statute that would serve to both increase efficiency and reduce logistical barriers to workers exercising their rights under the public sector organizing process.

LIUNA urges your support for HB 2573.

Respectfully,



Chris Hewitt, Political Director
Oregon & Southern Idaho District Council of Laborers