

February 2, 2023
House Committee on Rules
HB 2708

Sandra Gibson
Salem, OR

Chair Fahey and members of the House Committee on Rules.

Good afternoon. On Behalf of the Oregon School Employees Association, my name is Sandra Gibson, I am a Bilingual Identification & Recruitment Specialist for the Oregon Migrant Education Service Center at Willamette Education Service District under the Oregon Department of Education. I have 30 years of experience working as a classified employee in the state of Oregon. I have served in various classified positions in education including ESL Instructional Assistant, Newcomer Center Instructional Assistant, Migrant Education Program Specialist, Special Education Life Skills Classroom Assistant, Intense Behavior Special Education Preschool Instructional Assistant, Special Education Speech and Language Instructional Assistant, Special Education Sr. Clerical Specialist, Special Education Intake Specialist, In-Home Respite Care Provider, and Special Education Evaluation Support Specialist.

As a Classified employee in the Oregon Migrant Education Service Center, I am responsible for providing ongoing training to recruiters in the Migrant Education Program (MEP) across 18 regional programs in Oregon which includes 9 school districts and 9 ESDs. I provide trainings on a state and national level to our partner Migrant Education Program stakeholders, Migrant Education program students and their families. My position is essential in providing support to Migrant Education staff recruiters to ensure that migrant students are properly identified, registered, and served. This is in alignment with the mission of the Migrant Education Program which states that migrant children fully benefit from the same public education provided to other children and that they reach challenging academic standards and graduate with a high school diploma (or complete a GED) that prepares them for responsible citizenship, further learning and productive employment.

I am here to be the voice of my fellow classified employees who go above and beyond for Oregon schools' students every day. They keep our children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, and neighborhood students safe, healthy, nourished and support their learning day in and day out. While their work is often unrecognized, these dedicated educators and civil servants do very important jobs that are essential to our schools and communities. We ask that a week is designated as Classified School Employees Week in recognition for the support that these essential workers who keep school running, even in extraordinary circumstances.

We all have been touched and supported by these essential classified workers in our own life's if we just take a moment to reflect. We are reminded of the bus drivers, cross walk employees, the lunch staff, the recess duty staff, the janitorial staff, the school secretaries, speech pathologist assistant, 1:1 support staff assigned to a student on an IEP, and the library assistant to name a few! These classified staff are prepared everyday to provide the best care to the students that they serve. Their valuable work should be recognized and appreciated by all during Classified School Employees Week.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Sandra Gibson