



Oregon School Employees Association

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February 2, 2023

House Committee on Rules
Representative Julie Fahey, Chair

Re: Testimony in Support of HB 2708

Chair Fahey and Members of the House Committee on Rules:

My name is Sarah Wofford and I am the president of Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA). I come from southern Oregon where I have worked at Rogue Community College for 12 years as a classified accounting specialist.

Thank you for the opportunity to express strong support for House Bill (HB) 2708 on behalf of the OSEA. As you may know, OSEA represents more than 23,000 professional classified education workers in all 36 Oregon counties and in nearly all levels of Oregon public education, including Head Start programs, K-12 school districts, education service districts, special districts like parks and rec, and community colleges.

HB 2708 marks an important course correction for the state to acknowledge this core group of frontline workers-who have been frequently overlooked and underrepresented in state educational policy forums.

As you may know, the education of all of Oregon's youth is imperative to Oregon and to our nation; professional classified school employees is a term used to identify the myriad of employees who support the care and education in the daily life of a student. In a typical elementary school day, the ratio of classified public education staff to licensed staff is roughly 7 to 1. To better understand the diversity and importance of our roles, here is an abbreviated list of positions that include: special education, general education, medical, library and health assistants, media specialists, secretaries, clerical staff, interpreters, bus drivers and transportation staff, nutrition services, information technology workers, custodial staff, facilities staff, before- and after-school caregivers, campus monitors, safety and transition specialists. All of the above positions individually and collectively, are a vital component of Oregon's public school system.

Lastly, I would like to appeal to the state to address the critical staffing levels in many of these positions. Retention and recruitment of classified employees is critical to supporting a quality public education experience.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Sincerely,

Sarah Wofford,
OSEA State President

*The Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA) is an affiliate of
the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and the AFL-CIO.*

