



Senate Committee on Education

February 14, 2023

Testimony in Support of SB 283-3

Chair Dembrow, Vice-Chair Weber, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Oregon Center for Public Policy, I respectfully submit this testimony in support of SB 283 with the -3 amendments.

The Oregon Center for Public Policy is a nonpartisan think tank dedicated to improving the economic outcomes for all Oregonians, particularly low-income families and Oregonians of color, through research and analysis.

SB 283-3 aims to address the shortage in the K-12 education workforce and to create a more equitable and inclusive education infrastructure. The bill is an important first step in recognizing classified education workers – clerical workers, custodians, coaches, library staff, etc. – as a vital component to a quality education system for Oregon by requiring the appointment of a classified worker to the Task Force on Statewide Educator Salary Schedules. This is a critical step toward ensuring a deep examination of pay equity and work quality by the task force and the Oregon Department of Education.

The stability of a workforce is only as strong as the stability of each of its pieces. Classified educators tend to have low pay, high turnover rates, and limited access to employment benefits, because of the uncertainty and poor working standards associated with these positions. Classified education workers have experienced changes in scheduling and take-home pay over the last few years, with the average daily shift for classified positions now at about 3.5 hours. At this level, many workers have to cobble together multiple part-time jobs to make ends meet.

The SB 283-3 would help address this instability in two key ways:

(1) It provides the right for all classified educators to be “dismissed, demoted or disciplined *only for just cause*” [Ital. added]. This is a critical step in creating stability and removing the fear of being fired without a clear, justifiable reason. Moreover, *just cause* encourages employers to invest in employee development and training, further strengthening the education workforce.

(2) It establishes a 5-hour minimum for all shifts, giving classified employees greater predictability of their schedules and pay, while reducing their need to supplement their income with additional jobs. Moreover, a 5-hour shift will open access to health insurance and other benefits currently inaccessible to employees scheduled for 3.5 hours or less per day.

Our mission is to achieve economic justice for all Oregonians through research, analysis, and advocacy.

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Together, these changes will strengthen Oregon’s education workforce, giving educators the opportunity to do their best work and offer maximum support for all students, including students with special needs.

For these reasons we urge you to support SB 283 with the -3 amendments.

Alejandro Qeral
Executive Director
Oregon Center for Public Policy

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