

February 13th, 2023

Senator Michael Dembrow, Chair
Senate Committee on Education
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Chair Dembrow, Vice-Chair Weber, and members of the committee,

On behalf of the nearly 900 Professional and Technical Employees, Local 17 (PROTEC17) represented employees of City of Portland, I write today in support of SB 283 with the -3 amendments which would provide basic protections for classified school employees. PROTEC17 represents engineers, planners, information technology specialists, and technicians who live and work in the Portland area. Additionally, we represent approximately 8,000 public sector employees across Washington State.

The just cause protections that SB 283-3 provides are a critical step towards increasing equity and fairness in the workplace for classified employees. The just cause standard has a long history of providing a basic level of protection to employees who might otherwise be the target of unfair and discriminatory discipline in the workplace, and we believe that extending this standard is a crucial step to take. This is a common protection provided to other employees, and we believe that classified employees deserve the same fairness at work.

Additionally, SB 283-3 provides significant support for workers who provide critical support for special education functions, and extends equal access to unemployment insurance benefits for all education workers. These positive changes will help ease the burdens on education employees across the state and will have direct positive outcomes on the ability to recruit and retain the workforce that is needed in a very tight labor economy.

Thank you for your attention to these matters, and we ask for your support for SB 283-3.

Sincerely,



Elliot Levin
Research Director and Legislative Advocate
PROTEC17