



A STRONG VOICE FOR OREGON'S WORKERS

To: Chair Dembrow
Vice-Chair Weber
Members of the Senate Education committee

FR: Catie Theisen, Oregon AFL-CIO

RE: SB SB 283-3 Support

February 14, 2023

The Oregon AFL-CIO represents 300,000 workers across Oregon and is a voice for all workers in the legislative process. Among other reasons, we support SB 283-3 because classified education workers deserve just-cause provisions in their collective bargaining agreements just like every other unionized public sector worker.

Fundamentally, we believe that workers should not have to fear being fired without just cause and/or a merit-driven reason. A lack of just-cause protections opens far too many gray areas for discrimination and incentivizes dismissal instead of structural changes to improve worker retention.

A lack of just-cause also puts some of the most vulnerable workers at additional risk. Classified education employees already have incredibly challenging and important jobs at a lower rate of pay – the average wage is between \$20,000 - \$30,000 a year – and without many basic protections that other workers enjoy. These workers deserve just cause parity with other public sector workers.

SB 283-3 also helps improve representation on the work quality and equity taskforce and will implement better living wages to fundamentally stabilize this critical workforce.

If we want to meaningfully address the education shortage, it's critical that we start treating education workers as the valued part of the education system that we know they are by giving them the basic respect, protections and living wages that they deserve. We encourage your support of SB 283-3.

