



March 2, 2023

To: House Committee on Emergency Management, General Government and Veterans

From: Oregon Education Association

RE: Support HB 2650, Equitable Workgroups

Dear Chair Grayber and members of the committee,

The Oregon Education Association represents over 41,000 educators and education service professionals across the state, from pre-k to community colleges. Our members are classroom teachers, bus drivers, custodians, nutrition specialists, school counselors, community college professionals and more.

On behalf of our members, OEA supports HB 2650, which will help ensure that equitable processes are applied to all workgroups and Task Forces.

Our legislative process aspires to make laws that equitably serve us all, but when legislative workgroups and task forces lack diverse voices, or do not have directly impacted people as part of those workgroups, the process often creates policies and rules that will have unintended consequences or negative effects on people across the state, particularly Black, Indigenous, Latine, and other Oregonians of color.

Oregon is in the midst of an educator workforce crisis and as a result of HB 4030 from the 2022 short legislative session, a workgroup was formed in the summer of 2022 to help convene stakeholders across Oregon's education system to better understand the problem and formulate some concrete policy solutions. This workgroup had OEA classroom and special education teachers, substitutes, and education service professionals that were critical to understanding the challenges inside the workforce crisis and ways that legislators can tackle this issue. Without those critical, directly impacted voices of the problems we face, the workgroup's proposed solutions would be hollow. I share this example because although the 2022 summer workgroup included our members, it was not required for those voices to be in the room and part of the solution--- herein lies the problem and why HB 2650 is so important.



By requiring that policy-making tables integrate community-based organizations and people with lived experience, Oregon would generate better and more equitable outcomes in housing, health, business, public safety, and education.

Sincerely,

Michele Ruffin

Government Relations Consultant

Oregon Education Association