



Chair Taylor, Vice Chair Bonham and members of the committee,

My name is Odalis Aguilar and I am here to extend my support for SB 849 with the -1 amendment which creates a licensing pathway for out of state and internationally educated professionals on behalf of Oregon AFSCME.

Oregon AFSCME believes in economic and social justice for all Oregon workers and their families. One of our priorities is to empower and unite workers to create change in their workplaces and communities. Oregon AFSCME represents over 33,000 workers in the public sector. Our members work for the State of Oregon in addition to counties, municipalities and behavioral health nonprofits across Oregon as well as self-employed child care providers.

As you all know, the state is in the midst of an employment crisis where we are unable to fill in the gaps all over the state. At the same time, the state of Oregon is home to thousands of intelligent and educated individuals who are unable to resume their occupations due to the accessibility barriers in order to get relicensed in the state of Oregon. Currently 1 in every 5 immigrants hold a bachelor's degree or higher and Oregon has a growing demand for healthcare workers, educators, and social workers. At the same time, the state sees an increase in demand for workers who are multilingual and culturally competent.

The bill before you would facilitate the process in which an out of state or international educated professional would tackle the barriers for occupational licensing by establishing a grant funded program through the Higher Education Coordinating Commission to award grants to Local Workforce Development Boards to provide eligible career guidance and support services to residents of Oregon who are seeking to enter the Oregon workforce.

It's important to note that this bill does not reduce any standard for licensing, but rather opens up opportunities for those educated out of state to join the workforce. I urge your support for SB 849 with the -1 amendment.

Thank you for your consideration,

Odalis Aguilar Aguilar
Political Coordinator
Oregon AFSCME