



Service Employees International Union Local 503

72,000 public services workers, care providers, and non-profit employees in Oregon.

TO: House Committee On Economic Development and Small Business

RE: House Bill 3201

ON: March 9, 2023

Dear Chair Bynum, Vice-Chair Morgan, Vice-Chair Nguyen, and members of the committee,

I am writing to you today on behalf of SEIU Local 503, OPEU in support of House Bill 3201. SEIU represents 72,000 working people in every corner of our state, including thousands of workers whose jobs require them to have access to reliable internet either at home or in the community in order to do their job. As President of our union, I hear stories from our members every day about the ways in which the digital divide impacts them. This is no more true than for our homecare and personal support workers, and in particular those who live in rural areas of our state.

Based on a recent survey of our members, an estimated 7% of care providers don't have internet access at home. This is a real barrier to their ability to do their job. Care providers are required by federal law to use "Electronic Visit Verification," or EVV. The law requires that workers use EVV to report their hours, which they do using their mobile device. Inequitable access to reliable internet means that our members are not always able to get a signal in real time to enter their timesheet information. This can result in issues of late pay, inaccurate or incomplete pay, or possibly even termination. All because a worker lacks access to reliable internet.

Fundamentally for our union, this is an issue of fairness. All Oregonians, regardless of where they live or what job they do, deserve access to affordable, reliable internet. We support the state's ongoing commitment to improving our broadband infrastructure and urge the Legislature to take swift action to ensure Oregon doesn't miss out on valuable federal resources.

Sincerely,

Mike Powers
President
SEIU Local 503, OPEU