



March 16, 2023

From: Bill Bradley, ATU 757 Executive Board Officer

Re: Senate Bill 489 – Strongly Support

Chair Dembrow, Vice-Chair Weber, and Members of the Senate Committee on Education,

Amalgamated Transit Union, Local 757 represents school bus operators at Oregon’s largest school district, Portland Public Schools, under two separate collective bargaining agreements. One agreement covers “in-house” school bus operators, directly employed by Portland Public Schools. The other agreement covers student transportation that has been contracted out to the private sector. Both groups perform the same work under the same school calendar yet are treated differently when it comes to Unemployment Insurance.

No situation brought forward this incongruence more clearly than the COVID-19 pandemic. While our members that worked for the private contractor were able to apply and receive Unemployment Insurance when schools switched to virtual instruction, our in-house group (public sector) was left to fend for themselves through an extended period of uncertainty. The need for student transportation obviously had a temporary lull, but how these workers were able to cope with the sudden loss of hours and wages, had divergent paths. The contracted workers had the backstop of Unemployment Insurance, while the in-house workers were left to worry about meeting theirs and their family’s needs. It is simply wrong, in this day and age, that this inequity would continue to exist.

ATU strongly supports SB 489 and stands with the OSEA in seeking this update in statute. We urge that SB 489 be passed and give hard-working Oregonians the assurance and comfort of knowing that they can meet their needs when it matters most.