



**Service Employees International Union – Oregon State Council**  
6401 SE Foster ▪ Portland, OR 97206

March 16th, 2023

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

**Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 489 to eliminate restrictions on unemployment insurance (UI) benefits for public education employees.** My name is Alberto Gallegos and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), Oregon. SEIU Oregon is composed of SEIU Local 503 and SEIU Local 49, which together represent over 87,000 people. Local 49 represents private sector janitors, property service workers, light manufacturing, and healthcare workers; while Local 503 represents homecare workers, private nonprofit workers, in-home childcare providers, nursing home workers, and state and local government employees.

SEIU Oregon stands in solidarity with OSEA to remove unfair, extra barriers to accessing unemployment benefits for their members. Our members who meet the standard requirements for UI benefits have the ability to claim those benefits without having to go through extra hoops and over hurdles; which, we believe, is the way it should be for all workers. Unfortunately, that is not the case for all public education employees.

School employees filing for UI benefits during the summer are constantly denied due to the “reasonable assurance” test, which no other public nor private sector worker is subjected to. This forces workers to bear the brunt of financial insecurity during summer breaks. It is no surprise that this burden falls disproportionately on lower wage workers, women, and people of color.

Not only is this barrier unfair, it is disrespectful to the school employees who were hailed as heroes and essential while on the front lines throughout the pandemic keeping our schools operational.

**SEIU Oregon urges this committee to vote in support of SB 489 to eliminate this barrier.**

Thank you,

Alberto Gallegos  
Political and Government Relations Organizer  
SEIU, Oregon State Council