February 7, 2024

Chair Holvey, Vice Chairs Elmer and Sosa and members of the committee,

My name is Odalis Aguilar Aguilar and I am writing today on behalf of Oregon AFSCME Council 75 in support of HB 4115: Collective Bargaining Rights for Law Enforcement, Corrections, and Dispatcher Supervisors. Oregon AFSCME represents over 37,000 workers across the State of Oregon in both the public and private sector. Our membership ranges from the professionals and techs at OHSU to the folks working in local governments that carry out essential services.

This bill is crucial to ensure that supervisory police officers, corrections officers, and emergency dispatchers to existing law that allows for public safety professionals to choose to collectively bargain. In a time where public safety is at the forefront of Oregon's priorities, we must ensure that workers who are seasoned are continuing to lead the way for future generations to join the workforce.

This bill is a technical fix where the original collective bargaining law prior to 1995 allowed front line public safety supervisors (such as fire captains and police sergeants) the right to bargain wages, hours, and working conditions, but that right was taken away inadvertently by a bill in 1995. Not allowing public safety supervisors to bargain disincentives them from taking on leadership positions because they would lose benefits and protections currently held.

In a dire time of staffing shortages, public safety supervisors are still out in the community and in our institutions working alongside our frontline officers. They are responding to calls, navigating complex societal issues, and facing dangerous situations. We want to provide these line level leaders with the same basic protections given to the frontline officers they are supervising and supporting on the street and in our institutions. We urge your support on HB 4115 to support our public safety workforce.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Odalis Aguilar Aguilar
Political Coordinator
Oregon AFSCME