

Date: January 28th, 2025

To: House Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection

From: Nick Keough, Political and Legislative Organizer, AFT-Oregon

Re: Support for Public Finance Task Force (HB 2966)

Chair Sosa, Vice-Chairs Chaichi and Osborne, and Members of the Committee:

The American Federation of Teachers - Oregon AFT-Oregon is a federation of 27 local unions representing 18,000 education workers across early learning, K-12 classified, community colleges, and public universities. Our membership includes faculty, academic professionals, classified staff, and childcare workers in both public and private sectors.

Today, our labor federation is writing to express our enthusiastic support of HB 2966, which would establish a task force to examine and develop public financing strategies that benefit communities across Oregon. At AFT-Oregon, it is our belief that public financing can play a critical role in strengthening our local economies, funding essential infrastructure, and expanding access to affordable housing. HB 2966 would bring together diverse stakeholders to explore ways to leverage public financing tools that prioritize community investment, ensure financial stability, and reduce reliance on costly private financial institutions.

While there are many components of this bill that could stimulate greater economic activity in Oregon, our members are particularly interested in the task force considering public financing options for student loans, which could reduce costs for students and families. By offering lower-interest loans or other innovative solutions, Oregon could make higher education more affordable and accessible for its residents.

Altogether, HB 2966 is a smart, forward-thinking step toward a stronger Oregon. We urge you to support HB 2966. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Signed,

American Federation of Teachers – Oregon
<https://www.aft-oregon.org/about-aft-oregon>