

**Testimony in Support of HB 2958
Submitted by the Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA)**

February 16, 2025

House Committee on Revenue

Representative Nancy Nathanson, Chair

Chair Nathanson, Vice Chairs Reschke and Walters, and Members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Cassidy Kotter, and I am a Government Relations Specialist with the Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA). OSEA represents over 25,000 classified education professionals—bus drivers, instructional assistants, custodians, food service workers, and many others who play a vital role in our students' education and well-being, across all 36 Oregon counties and in all levels of public education. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 2958 today.

OSEA strongly supports HB 2958, a crucial bill that will strengthen the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and provide much-needed financial relief to working Oregonians, including thousands of classified employees who serve in our schools every day. Despite their dedication, many classified employees struggle to make ends meet on wages that do not reflect the essential work they perform. OSEA members make roughly \$36,000/year on average. Expanding and strengthening the EITC will provide a direct and meaningful benefit to these workers, ensuring they can support their families while continuing to serve Oregon's students.

For many classified staff, the EITC is a financial lifeline that helps cover rent, groceries, transportation, and other basic necessities. Enhancing this tax credit will put more money back into the pockets of working families, boosting household stability and contributing back into stronger local economies. Importantly, by making the EITC more accessible, HB 2958 will help lift more Oregon families out of poverty and reduce the financial stress that too often forces dedicated education workers to leave jobs they love in search of better-paying opportunities elsewhere.

Investing in the well-being of classified educators through a strengthened EITC is an investment in Oregon's public schools and, ultimately, in our students. When school employees can afford to stay in their positions, students benefit from the consistency, experience, and care that classified staff provide every day.

We urge the Legislature to pass HB 2958 and affirm its commitment to supporting working Oregonians, including the essential school employees who help keep our education system running.

Sincerely,

Cassidy Kotter (OSEA, Government Relations Specialist)