

Date: February 25th, 2025

To: House Committee on Higher Education and Workforce Development

From: Sergio (TJ Acena), OHSU & AFSCME Local 328

Re: Support for HB 3213: Public University Foundation Sunshine Act

Chair Hudson, Vice Chair Fragala, Vice Chair Harbick, and members of the House Higher Education Committee,

My name is TJ, and I am a Project Coordinator at Oregon Health & Sciences University. I am here today to speak in support of HB 3213, which would bring Oregon in line with national standards on public university foundations. At least 22 states, including Washington, California, Idaho, and Nevada, have already adopted laws ensuring public university foundation transparency.

My local, AFSCME local 328, which represents about 7,000 workers at OHSU is currently in bargaining right now. A common step of any bargaining is a request for information with the employer on their finances. Right now, we don't even know the full extent of university investments because foundations aren't required to disclose financial details. It's important for unions to have a clear understanding on the employer's finances in order to be able to bargain in good faith. While limited information on the foundation is available through OHSU's audited financial reports and the OHSU foundations 990 reported forms, this information only comes out yearly and is incomplete. In total, the OHSU foundation is a black box, and difficult to find information from.

Foundations operate as distinct legal entities from the universities they represent, yet their work is so integral to their continued operations. Further, the university foundations use a public institution's name and likeness while coordinating resources to support student affordability and academic programming. Given this close relationship to a public institution, public university foundations should be held to the same transparency standards as public institutions. Workers at universities should be able to easily request information from their foundations to understand not just how much funding they are sitting on, but also what limits are being put on the money.

HB 3213 provides transparency in line with many other states and still protects donor privacy, as you heard earlier. This is a no-nonsense bill that will raise Oregon's public records and transparency standards, building on the state's commitment to ethical governance and public accountability.

Thank you for your time, and I hope that I can count on your support of HB 3213 with the -1 Amendment.