

Date: February 25th, 2025

To: House Committee on Higher Education and Workforce Development

From: Felicity Ratway, CGE Local 6069

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

Chair Hudson, Vice Chair Fragala, Vice Chair Harbick, and members of the Committee,

My name is Felicity Ratway and I am a Graduate Research Assistant at Oregon State University and a member of the Coalition of Graduate Employees Local 6069, which represents 1,700+ Graduate Employees at Oregon State University. I am here today to speak in support of HB 3213.

The lack of transparency from the university administration during last year's CGE strike significantly damaged the trust between the university and its faculty and staff. When we negotiated for salary increases that would keep pace with the rising cost of living in Corvallis, the university administration failed to provide a clear and comprehensive financial picture. This lack of transparency made it difficult to have productive negotiations and led to a protracted strike that harmed all parties involved.

The bill promotes financial transparency within public university foundations, which is an essential start to rebuilding trust among all stakeholders, including students, faculty, staff, donors, and the general public. By mandating clear and accessible financial reporting, this bill would ensure that everyone can understand the university foundation's financial situation- and its relationship to the university it supports.

Importantly, the bill includes common-sense carve-outs to protect donor names, addresses, and identifiable information to protect donor privacy while ensuring accountability. The carve outs for donor anonymity are directly pulled from language that the University of California system proposed in California's similar legislation. Beyond that, Oregon's existing public records laws already safeguard donor personal information, volunteers, trade secrets, and investment strategies, ensuring that transparency does not come at the expense of security or competitiveness.

My union, representing the graduate employees at OSU, strongly supports this bill because it aligns with our core values of transparency, accountability, and shared governance. We believe that this bill would not only help to rebuild trust within the university community but also enhance the university's reputation and standing in the eyes of the public.

On a more personal note, I am hoping to graduate from OSU this year. If I choose to make donations as an alum, being able to see what the money I give is allocated to, and what existing Foundation funds are earmarked for, will help me make more informed decisions on giving based on visible unmet needs.

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