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Chair Hudson and members of the committee,

I am writing on behalf of SEIU 503 in support of House Bill 3213, which aims to increase transparency for public university foundations. This bill is an important step toward strengthening our state's transparency values and ensuring that public university foundations are held to the same standards as public institutions themselves. These foundations often use the name and likeness of a public institution, making their activities deeply intertwined with the university's mission. Given this close relationship, it is only fair that public university foundations adhere to the same transparency requirements as the universities they support.

As it stands, 92.5% of Oregon's \$3.5 billion in university endowments are restricted by secret donor-imposed conditions. This means that much of this funding is directed toward specific purposes outlined in private agreements between donors and the university foundations—purposes that often limit how funds can be used. In many cases, these restrictions prevent endowment funds from supporting crucial university functions like reducing tuition or ensuring fair wages for staff. SEIU 503 represents over 4,700 workers at Oregon's seven higher education institutions and this lack of transparency prevents citizens, including students and staff, from knowing how these funds are being utilized and whether they are being used in ways that best serve the broader university community.

HB 3213 will address this issue by ensuring that these agreements are made public. By passing this bill, Oregon can join this growing list of states and build on our commitment to public accountability. Strong transparency laws help build trust with all stakeholders—students, faculty, donors, and the public. By adopting HB 3213, we will ensure that public university foundations are held accountable for their financial operations, creating a fairer, more equitable system that benefits all students and the broader university community. I urge you to support HB 3213 and help bring Oregon in line with national standards for transparency.

Sincerely,

Elsie Elling

Political & Policy Strategist

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