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

For the record, my name is Elsie Elling, and I am the Political and Policy Strategist at SEIU 503. I am writing in support of HB 3182 and HB 3183.

SEIU 503 represents classified staff at all seven public universities in Oregon, we have members who help support students navigate the complex systems to getting their basic needs like housing and food security along with basic financial stability in order to finish their degrees. We also represent members who work at our public universities' libraries and work with students to help them find affordable textbooks and course materials.

These benefit navigators and library techs are some of the first line of support for students facing daunting financial struggles. Financial aid programs and scholarships designed for low-income students fail to cover the bulk of their needs. And working while in school does not eliminate the threat of food insecurity, housing insecurity, and other educational resource needs, like textbooks.

Our members are also feeling under resourced and need tangible resources and funding in order to support these students and programs. One member I spoke to, her job is centered around supporting faculty to adopt and create Open Educational Resources and then provide outreach on textbook affordability options to students. Open Educational Resources, including freely accessible textbooks, can significantly reduce the financial burden on students. These resources provide high-quality educational materials at no cost, aligning with the principle of open access to knowledge. The need is clear and growing, and we need to invest in our students to have safe and thriving campuses and a strong workforce for the future.

SEIU 503 is not the only labor group that is supporting low-income students in their times of need. Labor groups across higher education all support HB 3182 and HB 3183. You can find letters of support from AFT-OR, OEA and AAUP on OLIS highlighting why this slate of bills are important to faculty and staff.

Thank you for your time, and I hope that we can count on your support of HB 3182 and HB 3183.

Sincerely,

Elsie Elling

Political and Policy Strategist



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