

Chair Grayber, Vice-Chairs Muñoz and Scharf, members of the House Committee on Labor and Workforce Development,

I am writing on behalf of AFT-Oregon. We are a labor federation of unions across the state in early learning, K-12 schools, and our state's public colleges and universities. Our unions represent over 18,000 essential staff, instructors, faculty, and employees who support our students and advocate for the public good. **AFT-Oregon endorses HB 4011 as one of the highest of priorities for this legislative session and recommends the legislature pass this bill.**

Our K12 classified staff members from Hillsboro to Scappoose, Portland to John Day, support student learning outcomes day in and day out hands-on and in the maintenance of quality learning environments. Class size makes or breaks their ability to do their job. Class size can be the difference between a good, safe, supportive, growth-filled day at school for students and being unable to do their job -- which can lead to discipline, corrective action, or unsafe conditions for them or our students. Of no fault of their own. Because class size is out of their control.

Education professionals know that class size is more than a number, and that it must be a subject of negotiation. When budgets are cut, staff laid off, many districts think larger class sizes will fix the budget. It does not. Staff are put into impossible circumstances – it does not add up. If you are short-staffed, the work exceeds your capacity and what is being asked of you. Class size is a workplace issue plain and simple.

This is why labor unions exist in the first place. Early negotiations in the labor movement centered on such numbers and continues to this day - production quotas at an automobile plant, the number of operators on a freight train, the number of nurses to patients. In each of these scenarios human capacity and the demands being placed on them is measured numerically and is a key factor in being able to do the job asked of you safely and effectively.

All this bill asks for is that a conversation happens around class size. This bill does not set any quotas or prescribe any outcomes of bargaining. Right now, these conversations are not happening, and if they do, it is optional and very rare. HB 4011 -1 fixes this.

Educators know best how to do their jobs and the class sizes which enable them to do so. It should be a mandatory subject of bargaining, plain and simple. Budgets and staffing should fairly reflect educator expertise on effective class size.

On behalf of AFT-Oregon, we support HB 4011 -1 and urge its passage.

Sincerely,



Harper Haverkamp, PhD
American Federation of Teachers – Oregon (AFT-Oregon)