

**Joint Committee on Ways and Means – Subcommittee on Education
Public Hearing SB270A/HB 3120A
Wednesday May 29, 2013 8:30 am**

Chair Monroe, Chair Comp, and Members of the Ways and Means Committee,

My name is Robert Liebman. I am Professor of Sociology at Portland State University and a nominee for Presiding Officer of the Faculty Senate.

I am here to share with you a vote taken at our May 6 meeting when the PSU Faculty Senate [representing professors, Department Chairs, Assistant and Associate Deans] voted nearly unanimously that faculty should hold voting rights in any future PSU institutional board.

That vote came because a year earlier (June 2012) our Senate passed a resolution in support of HB 2149 based on our reading of language that the model of faculty representation under the OUS Board would be maintained.

I am here today to say that if SB270 passes and HB 2149 is compromised, the PSU Faculty Senate is prepared to withdraw its support for an institutional board at PSU.

Why?

Because Oregon has led the West in faculty and student participation.

Oregon is the only state in the Pac-12 that guarantees the voting rights of 2 faculty and 2 students among the 13 voting members of the OSBHE.

Oregon is not alone. The latest research shows that one of every seven public institutions (13.3%) has voting faculty members. Another 10% have nonvoting faculty members. That's a quarter of all public universities. According to Trusteeship, published by the Association of Governing Boards, the number of boards of trustees that involve faculty as voting or nonvoting members is growing. The lists include many of America's top-ranked private universities: Cornell, Duke, Carnegie-Mellon, Howard and more.

Because SB270 calls for an end to the practice of faculty voting, we should ask:
Has Oregon's practice worked badly?

Emphatically no. Your committee heard testimony last week that the system has worked well since 1999 when faculty representation began. A second faculty member was added in 2006 so now there is one faculty vote for the 3 research universities and one for the 3 regionals and OIT.

OSBHE members reported the positive benefits of having faculty such as Dalton Miller-Jones and Rosemary Powers who knew first-hand what was happening in classrooms and

laboratories and who could translate a stream of statistics into a meaningful picture of Oregon's record of student success and faculty research activity.

This matches what national reports say: ““best practices” for governing boards consistently cite improved relationships with the faculty as one of the characteristics of highly effective boards”

In the effort to create institutional boards, why, I ask, should the Oregon legislature end a practice that has worked well for nearly 15 years?

I know that SB 270 addresses a variety of subjects.

I am here to ask you to reject the language in SB 270 that blocks faculty voting rights on institutional boards.

If you take SB 270 as it is, you will be removing an existing voting right from key stakeholders in a higher education reform package that claims to extend stakeholder support.

If you take SB 270 as it is, you will be running against a national trend for more faculty participation because it is shown to be an effective way for board members that know finance and fundraising to learn from those who know teaching and research.

If you take SB 270 as it is, you will undo the work of your fellow Oregon legislators who voted for faculty and student representation in four legislative actions since 1999.

If you take SB 270 as it is, you stop future institutional boards at Oregon State and the regionals from having voting faculty members. OSU President Ed Ray has stated to faculty that he's for having voting faculty on an institutional board.

Faculty senates on other Oregon campuses plan to vote in coming weeks. I believe they will send the same message that I share with you today.

Please keep the Oregon voting system that has worked well for 15 years. Change the language of SB170 to keep voting rights for faculty to match voting rights for students.

Thank you.