



**Service Employees International Union – Oregon State Council**

6401 SE Foster • Portland, OR 97206

503-235-5141 • Fax: 503-408-4099

**March 25, 2015**

**To:** Members of the Senate Finance and Revenue Committee

**Fr:** Matt Swanson, SEIU Oregon State Council

**Re:** Senate Bill 129

The SEIU represents over 65,000 workers in Oregon and Southwest Washington. We represent members that provide care with the most vulnerable seniors, people with disabilities, and people with developmental disabilities. Our members serve the frontlines of the state and we know that we need to invest in the services that fund our communities. We support taking a hard look at the Gain Share Program to make sure that those resources are going into the services Oregonians rely on.

The Gain Share program represents a "double cut" to Oregon's needed services. The first cut comes when local governments offer tax breaks through the SIP program to industries. These cuts hurt school and service budgets. Then, because of Gain Share, these services are cut again when money is taken from the state General Fund and given back to local governments.

Often times the money secured through Gain Share goes to non-vital services. In Washington County, Gain Share funds are mostly used for special projects like changing one way streets to two way streets. While that may be important to safety, should it be a priority when we are cutting schools and cutting back in services?

The state economists' March forecast predicts the cost of Gain Share will be \$94.9 million in 2015-17 biennium with most of that funding going to just one county. Oregon is struggling to ensure that our kids have a full school year, families in need of childcare subsidies get them and vulnerable populations receive the services that they need. We need to invest in these services first before extending this program. The current bill could go farther.

Please consider the need for funding our current services before extending this program.