

September 13, 2017

Senator Richard Devlin  
Representative Dan Rayfield  
Joint Interim Committee on Referendum 301  
Oregon State Legislature

RE: IRR 301 Ballot Title & Explanatory Statement Adoption

Co-Chairs Devlin and Rayfield,

On behalf of the 15,000 members of the American Federation of Teachers-Oregon, we respectfully urge your committee to draft a ballot title and explanatory statement for Referendum 301 that fully and accurately reflects the impact of the measure on Oregonians.

Specifically, we believe that several key components must be included in the title. The result of a “no” vote would place the health care of over 375,000 Oregonians in jeopardy, result in the elimination of billions of dollars of state and federal funding for Oregon’s health care system, increase health insurance premiums for 200,000 Oregonians, and leave rural Oregonians with less access to affordable health care. These are concrete impacts on Oregonians and they should be clearly stated in the ballot title and explanatory statement.

Additionally, our union represents hardworking public servants in a variety of educational settings, including many part-time faculty at public higher education institutions. Despite our repeated efforts in the legislature, many part-time faculty do not have access to affordable health insurance, even if they work full-time at several institutions. The result is that some of our members rely on the Oregon Health Plan in order to obtain health coverage. We are especially concerned about this population of dedicated educators and how R301 will impact them and their health coverage in the coming months and years.

Referendum 301 would impact hundreds of thousands of Oregonians and their families on a direct human level that is rarely seen on our ballots. The ballot title and explanatory statement should take that in to account and fully reflect that reality.

Respectfully,



Marcus Swift  
Director of Political and Legislative Affairs  
AFT-Oregon