



March 1, 2017

House Higher Education and Workforce Development Committee
Chair Rep Reardon; Vice Chairs Rep Alonso Leon and Rep
Whisnant and Committee members.

We at SEIU Local 503 are writing in strong support of **HB 2864 -
Cultural Competency for Higher Education in Oregon
Universities and Community Colleges** being heard today in your
committee.

The bill is a culmination of workgroup bill that we supported last
session - under the tutelage of the Oregon Student Association
and - at the time - Vice Chair of this committee - Rep Joseph
Gallegos.

As you may know SEIU represents about 4500 workers on the
seven University campuses. We believe that there is a need for
the kinds of orientations; trainings and oversight on cultural fluency
and competence - as our state experiences exciting times with a
more diverse and robust citizenry. That diversity is even more so
experienced in our youth and in our education systems and that is
why these concepts are topical and very important now.

As background our members maintain grounds and all campus
spaces; support libraries; IT; health services; nutrition and
academic programs in most of the non-teaching and non-
management positions on campus. But we see Higher Education
issues from a second important vantage point – as over half of our
65,000 statewide members are low wage earners; most without
health care and retirement benefits. They and their families know
that post-secondary training and education is the way out of
poverty for their families; neighbors; clients and loved ones.

That is why we take great pride in working alongside students and
faculty to improve our systems of state Higher Education. And that
is also why we are involved in **A Better Oregon** coalition - to find a
revenue solution to the state's systemic funding problems – and
afford the kinds of programs described in HB 2864 as well as many
others. Thank you for your consideration of this measure.

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