ASSOCIATION OF OREGON FACULTIES

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March 15, 2017

To: Senate Committee on Workforce
Re: SB 913 and 560

Chair Taylor, Vice-Chair Knopp, and members of the committee,

The Association of Oregon Faculties (AOF) is an independent, non-union based organization, representing faculty from Oregon's seven public universities. AOF seeks to protect and improve the working environment and fair compensation for Oregon university faculty and to help ensure that the Oregon University System gets adequate funding in the state appropriations process.

Similar to SB 560, to which we submitted testimony in opposition, Senate bill 913 seeks to reduce the retirement benefits of all state employees, and will have an especially profound impact on faculty in Oregon's universities, potentially causing a flurry of retirements and making recruiting difficult. Oregon's universities already pay less, sometimes far less, than equivalent institutions of higher education elsewhere in the nation.

In the past, the universities could argue to prospective faculty that even though pay was low, they could have some security in retirement. Alas, that is decreasingly the case. The "reforms" of 2003 and, especially, 2013, substantially reduced retirement benefits for faculty. Oregon needs to keep its promise to hard working Oregonians, including faculty. Were SB 913 or SB 560 to pass, faculty enrolled in Tier 3 could see as much as a 30% reduction in their pensions. Not only would that undermine recruitment, but it could also lead to substantial faculty flight and low morale, neither of which would be conducive to a successful educational experience for Oregon's students. We also believe that both of these bills have constitutional issues as written, and thus, the state would be involved in yet another long, expensive, and potentially fruitless legal battle.

We encourage you to reject SB 913 and SB 560, and thank you for your consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,

Alan Bakalinsky, President,
On behalf of the Board,
Association of Oregon Faculties

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