

To: Senate Committee on Workforce
From: AFT-Oregon
Date: March 15, 2017
Re: Opposition to Senate Bills 560 and 913

Chair Taylor and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the American Federation of Teachers-Oregon (AFT-Oregon), I respectfully urge your opposition to Senate Bills 560 and 913. AFT-Oregon represents approximately 15,000 workers in Oregon's community college and universities in faculty, graduate employee, and classified positions, K-12 classified positions, and child care workers. These members stand in opposition to these illegal, extreme, and unfair bills.

SB 560 and SB 913 will negatively impact the lives, families, and communities of our members who work in Oregon's K-12 schools in Canyon City, John Day, Portland, Hillsboro, and Scappoose. Every day those workers make sure our students arrive to school safely, provide healthy meals, keep public facilities safe and clean, assist special education students, and maintain high quality libraries. Many of these workers struggle to afford necessities for their family now – let alone in the future. These bills strip away their ability to save for a dignified retirement.

In addition to the harmful impact on Oregon's frontline education workers, SB 560 and 913 will make it more difficult to attract and retain quality faculty members in Oregon's community colleges and universities. Our members enter the profession to serve students and help train and educate the next generation of leaders – not to get rich. But today, many of our members are part-time faculty with low salaries, no real job security, and in many cases, do not have access to affordable health insurance through their employer. Many struggle to afford housing and food. This bill would make it more difficult to survive and more difficult to attract quality instructors to the profession. That, in turn, will harm Oregon's economy and workforce development.

Aside from the real-life impacts on Oregon public servants listed above, our members also have considerable concerns about the policy and legal implications of these bills. For starters, these bills break promises made during 2003 reforms. Senate Bill 560 and 913 would eliminate the IAP program for new hires and reduce their retirement benefit by 31%. These bill cuts retirement benefits for public employees working today and changes the rules under which they were hired. Lastly, these bills directly break the promises made in 2003 when the IAP accounts were created and will face a lengthy and expensive court challenge.

Hundreds of members of AFT-Oregon have already called their State Senators and Representatives to share their opposition to these illegal, unfair, and extreme proposals. Tens of thousands more are closely watching as these bills are heard and debated. AFT-Oregon strongly urges your opposition to Senate Bills 560 and 913.

Sincerely,



Marcus Swift
Director of Political and Legislative Affairs
AFT-Oregon