



**Western Oregon University Federation of Teachers**  
Local 2278, AFT, AFL-CIO

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Western Oregon University, Monmouth, OR 97361

*Representing Faculty at WOU since 1974*

**Testimony on House Bill 2019 – House Committee on Revenue**  
**March 16, 2017 – 1 p.m. – Hearing Room A**

Chair Barnhart, Vice Chairs Smith Warner and Bentz, and members of the committee:

My name is Dr. Mark Perlman and I am a professor at Western Oregon University. I am also President of the Western Oregon University Federation of Teachers, a local of the American Federation of Teachers-Oregon.

I'm here today to urge your committee to support House Bill 2019. Oregon is facing a \$1.7 billion dollar budget deficit this year, thanks to our rank of dead-last in corporate taxes. For Oregon's students, this budget crisis means another round of massive tuition hikes at Oregon's public community colleges and universities at a time when higher education is moving out of reach for many students and leaving most graduates with crushing college loan debt.. Some state universities have already announced 10-12% tuition increases, and though WOU has not yet finalized its tuition increase for Fall 2017, it is expected that tuition will go up at least 5%, and perhaps as much as 10%. For Oregon's dedicated faculty and classified workers in higher education, budget cuts will mean more eliminated positions, and reduced hours, wages, and benefits. Departments and programs at WOU have been directed to make projections and plans for 5% and 10% cuts to their individual budgets, and these budgets are already inadequate due to the ever shrinking funding from the state. Our students, faculty, and staff deserve better.

These cuts and tuition hikes mean trying to do more for less in an already stretched system. They continually harm our state's ability to reach 40-40-20 goals, and will have long-lasting impacts on our state's workforce and competitiveness – which will only harm our economy. We need corporations pitch in their fair share to fund the critical services and an affordable, quality education system. To do this, we need tax policies that are right for Oregon's economy. And to have a fair and accurate discussion of these policies, we need to know that they are based on good data. Unfortunately, very little of this data is currently available, even to lawmakers, because of Oregon's weak disclosure laws. That's why we need HB 2019.

HB 2019 will allow all Oregonians to know the truth about how much or – more likely – how little, Oregon's biggest corporations pay in taxes. This information will allow all of us to have an informed conversation about tax policy and help us move our state's higher education system forward – not continually backwards. It's time that we stop making cuts to higher education and raising tuition while Oregon is at the bottom of the nation in corporate taxes. The citizens expect corporations that benefit so much from tax-funded programs to contribute their fair share to them. HB 2019 will shed light on the degree to which we are allowing corporations in Oregon to avoid paying their fair share. We cannot make informed decisions without knowing the facts, and HB 2019 will allow everyone to know these important facts about Oregon's economy.

For these reasons, the faculty at WOU recommend passage of HB 2019.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Dr. Mark Perlman, Ph.D.

Professor of Philosophy, Western Oregon University

President, Western Oregon University Federation of Teachers, Local 2278, AFT-Oregon, AFT, AFL-CIO