



## **Testimony in Support of HB 3170**

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House Committee on Business and Labor

Chris Hewitt

ONA represents nearly 15,000 nurses throughout the Oregon, providing care in almost every setting across the health care industry as well as instructing our vital nursing workforce in higher education settings throughout the state. While most faculty in Oregon's public universities and community colleges today are represented by a union, including numerous nurse educators, many research employees remain prohibited from organizing. ONA supports HB 3170 as an important means to allow research employees at our public universities the same rights to collectively bargain as their colleagues.

Researchers at Oregon's public universities conduct important studies while also raising significant revenue through grants and instructing students, resulting in extensive benefit to our institutions and the public at large. This includes delivering indispensable evidence-based research that serves to advance our standards of care and public health practices, often leading to improved patient outcomes.

However, while research faculty possess the same teaching, research, outreach, and service responsibilities as their colleagues, they have no right to collectively bargain over wages, benefits, or working conditions due to limited supervisory authority. Without access to basic employment protections, many research faculty members can be terminated once their grant funding ends, thereby discontinuing critical research initiatives.

HB 3170 is a common-sense policy that would simply amend the definition of "supervisory authority" in Oregon's Public Employee Collective Bargaining Act (PECBA) to permit faculty with limited supervisory authority the right to collectively bargain with regard to their wages, benefits and working conditions. There is already an exception that exists in the supervisory authority section of PECBA allowing charge nurses union rights, which has increased continuity and presented no impediment within the health care sector. Given the unique nature of research work in higher education, this bill would similarly provide another straightforward exception for these faculty members.

HB 3170 will simply allow all teaching and research faculty at Oregon's public universities to have an important voice in their workplace by permitting access to the same collective bargaining rights that countless others in these academic settings currently benefit from.

**ONA urges your support for HB 3170.**