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TO: Chair Holvey
Vice-Chair Bynum
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Members of the House Committee on Business and Labor

FR: Graham Trainor, Oregon AFL-CIO

RE: *Oregon AFL-CIO Support for HB 3170, Ensuring a Voice for Research Faculty*

April 12, 2017

My name is Graham Trainor representing the over 300,000 working Oregonians of the Oregon AFL-CIO. Thanks for the opportunity to testify in strong support of HB 3170 and efforts to ensure a voice for Oregon's public university research faculty.

The State Federation of Labor has been the long-term advocate for greater worker protections and more opportunities for workers to come together collectively to solve problems in the workplace. We believe in the fundamental value of collective bargaining as a right that all workers should enjoy and as a way to strengthen the middle class in our state. Any time the Oregon Legislature has considered expanding the ability for workers to come together through collective action in the workplace, the Oregon AFL-CIO has supported that effort.

HB 3170 is a minor, but vitally important change to Oregon's Public Employee Collective Bargaining Act (PECBA). Research faculty at public universities are incredibly valuable members to their respective institution, and the public at large, due to their ability to conduct cutting-edge research and raise significant amounts of revenue through external research grants. These faculty members are some of the top minds in the state often working on the global stage of innovation, but unfortunately, unlike their faculty peers who already have the right – if they choose – to collectively bargain, these research faculty members currently lack that same right due to their very limited amount of supervisory authority. As a worker advocate, we believe this basic and fundamental right should be granted to these research faculty members in order to balance the playing field for integral members of our public institutions.

This is a very simple bill as it only pertains to public universities and only faculty who have an academic – not administrative – focus at those universities. There are already a few groups of workers with some supervisory authority granted collective bargaining under PECBA, like nurses and fire fighters, and we believe this basic right should be extended to this group of workers as well.

In academic settings, many research faculty can be terminated when their grant funding is discontinued, halting valuable research projects. Additionally, without the right to collectively bargain, there are no mechanisms that truly give faculty enforceable legal protection to defend academic freedom in both

teaching and research. In order to give a voice to these research faculty and ensure their ability to gain the basic protections that many of their peers already enjoy, HB 3170 is a timely and important bill that helps balance the rights of these valuable members of our public institutions.

The Oregon AFL-CIO strongly urges your support for HB 3170 to ensure a voice for Oregon's public university research faculty.