



Testimony in Opposition to HB 3428

Chair Greenlick and members of the committee, Oregon AFSCME opposes HB 3428. HB 3428 would force almost all public employees into CCO plans including the vast majority of our memberships. Our members whether they are State workers or work for local governments have worked with their employers for decades to negotiate their health benefits as part of their total compensation. This bill pulls the rug out from every person that works in the public sector. We do not deny that for most of our members they have a solid health benefit but often that was bargained at the expense of more wages. We understand the need to control the cost of government and think there are ways to do it that would actually make Oregon work better. However, it seems like most of the cost containment ideas like HB 3428 are just an effort to make the public sector the employer of last resort. Do we really want to have the state or local governments to be the least desirable work in Oregon by decreasing their total compensation and constantly attacking their benefits? Who are we going to be able to recruit to work for the public sector? Oregon works best when we can recruit the best people to work here.

I think often the Public Employee Benefit Board (PEBB) and the Oregon Educator Benefit Board (OEBB) are maligned and made a target because of the rising cost of healthcare. The rising cost of healthcare is not the fault of OEBB or PEBB and these two institutions are working hard to control cost. The idea that we could abolish them to lower cost is suspect to AFSCME. We believe that OEBB and PEBB are important tools to put pressure on the healthcare industry to control cost and to most all public employees to CCO would take away that tool. Please vote No on HB 3428.

Respectfully Submitted;

Joe Baessler

Political Director Oregon AFSCME