

May 18, 2017

Chair Roblan and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the 15,000 workers represented by the American Federation of Teachers-Oregon, I respectfully request your support for House Bill 3170. HB 3170A is a small fix to a large and complex issue that has resulted in confusion and inefficiencies.

The majority of AFT-Oregon members work in public higher education. We represent public university faculty at the University of Oregon, Western Oregon University, Eastern Oregon University, and adjunct faculty at Portland State University. We also represent graduate teachers at the University of Oregon and Oregon State University and faculty at several public community colleges. In those institutions, our faculty unions work collaboratively with the administration on a variety of issues pertaining to the school. That model of shared governance, priority setting, and open communication provides an immense benefit to all parties involved – especially the students.

However, we have encountered a population of public university faculty across the state who – unlike their colleagues who perform similar work - lack the ability to have a voice in their workplace. This is due to the fact they may have limited supervisory authority at some times, but not at others. Like their colleagues, however, these faculty are primarily focused on academic, research, and outreach – not supervising employees or working as administrators. The result can be a patchwork of eligibility for faculty across Oregon, which leads to inefficiencies and confusion for administrators and faculty alike.

HB 3170 would fix that. It seeks to create a line between faculty with a research and academic focus and administrators who truly are supervisors. Oregon law already grants collective bargaining rights to public employees with supervisory authority, including nurses and fire fighters. Nurses have had the right to join a union since 1995, a process which has worked well. Fire fighters received similar rights in 2014 on bipartisan votes in the Oregon House and Senate.

HB 3170 will allow all teaching and research faculty at public universities to have a voice in their workplace – if they so choose. As AFT-Oregon's top priority for the 2017 session, our 15,000 members urge your support for HB 3170.

Sincerely,



Marcus Swift  
Director of Political and Legislative Affairs  
AFT-Oregon