

February 20, 2017

House Business and Labor Committee:

I write this in support of HB 2005.

As a woman, retired educator, and member of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) of Oregon, I am deeply concerned about the issue of Fair Pay.

I am writing this letter to show why we need Fair Pay -- not because I was denied it, but because I was fortunate enough to work under a pay system that was public and addressed the salaries of any certified, full time teacher in the system. I worked with the confidence that if I started the school year with a Masters' Degree and 15 years experience, the male teacher next door with the same level of education and experience would be paid the same as I was paid. I thank our union, the National and Oregon Education Association, for the work they did to ensure this equality continued.

Unfortunately, this has not been the experience of many of my friends and neighbors who did not have the benefit of being paid the same for similar work. I have also observed that women who earn less than men during their working life receive far less during their retirement, and consequently, many senior women who have worked conscientiously for 30 years or more often end up living in poverty.

It saddens me to the core to know that women in other occupations do not have the strength of a union behind them to protect them from pay disparity. Their only hope is legislation that acknowledges this ongoing inequality directed at working women. I urge you to look closely at this issue and to cast your vote in favor of pay equality for all women.

Yours,

Gloria Holland Smith
Salem, OR