



Service Employees International Union, Local 503, OPEU

To: House Higher Education and Workforce Development Committee Chair Rep Jeff Reardon; Vice Chairs Rep Teresa Alonso Leon and Rep Gene Whisnant; and Committee members.

From: Len Norwitz; Senior Political Organizer - SEIU – Service Employees International Union – Local 503

Date: February 6, 2018

We at SEIU Local 503 are writing in support of **HB 4141** - an act that would require governing boards at each public university to establish Tuition Advisory Councils to make recommendations regarding tuition and mandatory enrollment fees.

As you may know SEIU represents about 4500 classified workers on the seven University campuses. We have been very much involved in the issues of university governance since the beginning of this decade when the ‘Independence movement’ and the breakup of the Oregon University System and it’s State Board of Higher Education began. To summarize for those of you not in the Legislature at that time – “We were not a fan of those changes

Throughout the subsequent processes SEIU advocated for more internal campus voices on the newly created Institutional Boards and HECC and asked for levels of democracy that would aide in balancing economic decisions and business interests with the interests of successfully supporting and educating students at our Public Universities and Community Colleges.

We do see the oversight of the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) as an appropriate filter and advisor for reviewing and advising the Oregon Legislature on Higher Education issues and levels of support.

And we write in support of **HB 4141** because we see it as an effort to help move those same principles – internal voice participation; democracy and guidelines that can inform campus interests with advice and appropriate protocols. Ensuring that members of a community are involved - is what creates an ethical democracy. Students are directly impacted and should have an institutionalized say in the process.

As background our members maintain grounds and all campus spaces; support libraries; IT; health services; nutrition and academic programs in most of the non-teaching and non-management positions on campus. But we see Higher Education issues from a second important vantage point – as over half of our 65,000 SEIU statewide members are low wage earners; most without health care and retirement benefits. They and their families know that post-secondary training and education is the way out of poverty for their families; neighbors; clients and loved ones. And that drives our interests as well.

We feel that **HB 4141** – and Tuition Advisory Councils as a good step in the direction of campus collaboration and transparency that will serve Oregonian students; their families and our members in a positive way. Thank you.

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