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Senate Committee on General Government and Accountability
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Riley and Members of the Committee:

I have worked in public administration for nearly 25 years, the lion share working for school districts. Over this time I have been involved in numerous construction projects, including filling the role as Program Executive for a \$179 million dollar capital construction program currently underway in the Greater Albany Public School District (GAPS). We currently have three architectural firms under contract with contracts totaling millions of dollars. In each case there was certainly more than one firm that could have admirably done the job. Yet there is no way for me to tell GAPS' patrons that they got the best bang for the buck as cost is kept hidden throughout the entire process.

Everyone wants quality construction, whether it is a fire station, a school, or your own home. Each of us would want a qualified architect to design our new home, but who would not factor cost into the equation? Who would determine who the most qualified architect was and then ask their price and try and negotiate a contract without knowing how much our second or third choice would charge for the same work? Imagine doing that if all three architects were within a single point on your evaluation scale. Your number one choice might have plenty of work and will charge you a premium while the number two choice might have had a job fall through recently and can give you a great price because they have available resources. But under this scenario, and under current law for public agencies, one will never know.

Let me be clear. Based on my experience this bill is not a low-bid model. Under this bill public agencies are free to follow the current process, or they can opt for an alternative track that maintains a qualifications-first screening process. Only after it has been determined that the firms selected are indeed qualified to do quality work will cost information be considered. The win-win-win here is that the selection process will be more efficient, qualified firms will still be performing the work, and public agencies will finally be able to ensure that the taxpayer is getting the overall best bang for the ever scarce buck. I urge passage of this bill.

Respectfully,

Russell Allen
Director of Business and Operations