



Service Employees International Union, Local 503, OPEU

To: House Committee on Business and Labor - Chair Rep Barker; Vice Chairs Rep Bynum and Rep Barreto and Committee members

From: SEIU Local 503 – Len Norwitz, Senior Political Organizer

Re: HB 2660

Date: February 4, 2019

Find this as testimony in support of **HB 2660** – which would provide a pathway to Unemployment Insurance for Custodial and Maintenance workers in Public Schools.

SEIU 503 represents a little more than 500 workers at Portland Public School. About 300 are custodians and the other 200 work in the Nutrition Services department. Custodians are 12 month employees while nutrition services workers work based on the school day calendar. There is a summer program that is essentially treated as a separate position that employees about 30 NS workers over the summer break.

Throughout the school year, SEIU custodians maintain the almost 100 schools and administrative buildings of Portland Public School District. This not only includes general cleaning and sanitation, but projects of varying size that require ongoing planning and staffing. With funding levels for the department so low already, it is necessary to plan for deep cleaning during all school breaks. The summer break is especially important because the schools are deep-cleaned from top to bottom and there are also big projects like resealing all of the floors.

Custodians absolutely expect to work through the summer. If there were to be a furlough or a layoff, it is important that they qualify for unemployment insurance. These members depend on a year-round salary and rely on that income as any other worker would.

As our allies at the Oregon School Employees Association write – “HB 2660 removes the unfair restriction on UI benefits for school janitorial, custodial, facilities and maintenance workers. It makes them subject to the same rules as any non-school employee laid off for the summer, just no longer denied compensation because they choose to work for a school district.”

We strongly encourage the committee to support HB 2660. Thank you.

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