



To: Chair Barker, members of the House Business and Labor Committee

From: Jared Mason-Gere, Oregon Education Association

RE: Support for HB 2660, benefits for unemployed education personnel

Chair Barker, members of the House Business and Labor Committee:

The Oregon Education Association, representing 45,000 professional educators, supports HB 2660 to rectify a longstanding injustice: workers in public education settings may not qualify for unemployment, even if tenuous short-duration or seasonal work can leave them without work or a means to pay their bills and support their family.

While the majority of the 7,000 classified employees the Oregon Education Association represents are on a 12-month contract, there is a subset of worker that cannot count on maintaining employment through summer months or even being retained in subsequent years. The least we owe these workers who are willing to take risks to serve our students, is that there will be a safe landing for them if their employment does not continue and they must undertake a search for a new job or career.

With difficulties around hiring and retaining qualified education employees on the rise, and education budgets ever tighter and more unpredictable, it is becoming more and more important that we find ways to send the signal that it is safe to take a classified position in public education.

Please support HB 2660.