



Date: 3/20/2019

To: The Honorable Chair Wagner, Vice Chair Thomsen, and Members of the Senate Education Committee

From: American Federation of Teachers-Oregon, David Rives, President

RE: Position statement on SB 958 Tuition Equity and SB 859 Dreamers Access Program

Chair Wagner, Vice-Chair Thomsen, and Members of the Senate Education Committee,

The American Federation of Teachers-Oregon (AFT-OR) is a union representing 13,000 Oregon workers in K-12, community college and higher education in faculty and classified positions; and child care workers, in both public and private sectors. AFT-OR is in support of SB 958 which would establish the Dreamers Access Program, a student loan program for tuition equity eligible students and SB 859 which would amend current tuition equity statute to make sure that graduate students who meet criteria are eligible for in-state tuition.

Our members serve the very communities SB 958 seeks to support and know first hand the value DACA students bring to the classroom and Oregon as whole. We feel strongly that this population should have every opportunity to pursue their education and access to financial aid is far and beyond the number one factor that determines whether or not attending a college or university is within reach, or not. We also urge this body to consider that should a student loan program for DACA students go into effect that those loans be low interest. If they are not we feel it will compromise the integrity of the program.

Likewise, our members strongly support the ability of their students to go on to graduate school. Having a graduate degree increases desirability in the workplace substantially. The more educated Oregon's workforce is, the more attractive we are to new industries considering moving here. This benefits our teachers, students, and our economy. That's why this investment is so worthwhile. Therefore, SB 859 poses an opportunity for our state to serve students and invest in our future.

On behalf our members we urge this body to pass both SB 958 and SB 859 to the benefit of thousands of students and working families across our state. Thank you.