



**Service Employees International Union – Oregon State Council**  
6401 SE Foster ▪ Portland, OR 97206

March 26th, 2019

Chair Salinas; Vice Chairs Hayden and Nosse, Members of the Committee:

For the record my name is Felisa Hagins and I am offering testimony representing the Service Employees International Union Oregon State Council. On behalf of the more than 80,000 public and private sector workers represented by SEIU local 49 and 503, we urge your support of House Bills 3063. SEIU Local 49 represents more than 13,000 members throughout Oregon and Southwest Washington. Our members include licensed practical nurses, respiratory therapists, radiologic technologists, nursing assistants, phlebotomists, laboratory assistants, customer service representatives, food service workers, housekeeping and many other healthcare classifications. Additionally, SEIU Local 503 represents public health workers here at the state of Oregon.

SEIU members live and work in communities throughout the state and come from diverse backgrounds. Over 30% of our members are people of color or identify as non-white. They all share a belief that all Oregonians should have access to culturally competent, quality, affordable health care. It is one of our core principles to fight for equity and against the unjust, discriminatory treatment Oregonians of color experience every day.

According to the Oregon Health Authority State Health Assessment from 2018, the inequities in our state are stark: Oregonians of color more likely to be uninsured. They are more likely to experience homelessness, and they significantly more likely to be incarcerated.

The discriminatory practices that have existed throughout Oregon's history have led to the tragic inequities. As recently as the 1990s 'redlining' policies prevented Oregonians of color from buying homes in neighborhoods with access to quality schools, grocery stores and health care facilities. OHA's report speaks extensively about the generational trauma inherited by Oregonian children, causing them to struggle in school and with their health.

Hospitals, CCOs, local public health authorities and other providers have long used social determinants of health in their community health assessments. We applaud them for this work, but we believe this crisis calls for greater action, particularly when it comes to culturally competent health care.

Experts and stakeholders surveyed for the 2018 OHA report continually highlighted these issues, saying "communities need culturally responsive and trauma-informed health care...in appropriate languages, along with interpretation and translation when needed". In order to reach these historically marginalized communities, we must have health care providers who can understand the unique cultural history and inequities faced by their patients.

We are proud to support HB 2986 to begin to address these serious disparities.

Thank you for your time,

Felisa Hagins

Political Director

SEIU Local 49