

Education Subcommittee of Ways and Means Co-chairs Sen Frederick; Rep McLain and members of the committee.

My name is Richard Kavanagh, I live in Independence, Oregon, and I am writing to speak on Higher Education funding for the coming biennium. I've worked at Western Oregon University for nearly nine years. I'm an SEIU member and president of our sub-local. I'm also a proud graduate of WOU.

As you know, SEIU represents roughly 4500 classified staff members across seven Public University campuses. Our work is critical to supporting student success, in front-line services that students and faculty rely on.

Many of our own members have relied on our union's Hardship fund for emergencies. We raise money all over campus to support the community needs we see in our midst. Many of us know students who have had to go part-time or leave the university because of high tuition.

Since measures 5 and 50 passed in the early 90's Oregon has been on a downward track funding education. College students and their families have seen tuition skyrocket. Meanwhile, large corporations have seen their total effective state tax rate drop to among the nation's lowest, with costs of public services shifting onto people and small business as a result. Why are the biggest corporations being protected from taxation while students are being asked to pay more?

This year the legislature has a historic opportunity, right now, to reverse this legacy of disinvestment. SEIU joins many voices in the state calling on our lawmakers to raise revenue for new investment money for education this biennium.

For the Universities that means an additional \$120 million for public universities and \$77 million for community colleges (above the 2017-19 Legislative Approved Budget). Without meeting basic Current Service Levels institutions will face a significant shortfall that can only be closed with a combination of huge tuition increases and cuts to services, programs, and jobs. University students; faculty; staff; our communities and families say the time is now. Thank you.

Richard Kavanagh, Programmer Analyst – President of SEIU Local 082

Kimber Townsend, Administrative Program Assistant – Vice President of SEIU Local 082

Sharyne Ryals, Administrative Program Assistant – Secretary of SEIU Local 082

Jackson Stalley, Library Tech 3 – Chief Steward of SEIU Local 082

To Education Sub Committee of Ways and Means Chairs Sen Frederick and Rep McLain and members of the committee:

My name is Leonora Rianda and I live in Albany, Oregon and as you read this I am busy supporting two academic departments at OSU, Ethnic Studies and Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. These departments attract and retain talented students from historically underserved populations at OSU, groups that often face the most obstacles meeting higher tuition rates.

I am writing on behalf of them and my fellow SEIU union officers to urge you to increase Higher Education funding for the coming biennium. I have worked at Oregon State University for over 20 years. I am an SEIU member and the President of our OSU local which represents OSU classified staff across the state. I am also contacting you as a grandmother of a little boy living in Oregon and ready to start school. Lastly, I am an alternate bargaining delegate for our Bargaining team that is in talks about wages, insurance and fair and respectful working conditions for all classified staff in universities.

SEIU represents classified workers on the seven Public University campuses. Our work is critical to support student success in classrooms and frontline services that they need.

But we are members of another larger organization, our union SEIU represents 80,000 workers, over half which are low wage earners; many without health care or retirement benefits. They and their families know education is the path to economic security. We want all Oregonians to be successful in school, starting with my grandson, Attlee, to the many students who return to school and may enroll in the many online classes OSU offers. We write for the wider community asking that you support student success and the promise that represents to our members, their families and all Oregonians.

Hopefully this committee will consider funding for Higher Education. Since measures 5 and 50 passed in the early 90's, Oregon has been on a downward track funding education. College students and their families have seen tuition skyrocket. Meanwhile, large corporations have seen their total effective state tax rate drop to among the nation's lowest, with costs shifting to people and small business as a result. On our campus we see a rising urgency to make the wealthy interests in our state pay their fair share. There is a real inspiration we're catching from public employees stepping up for investments across the country.

The Co-Chairs of the Joint Committee on Ways & Means released their proposed budget. This budget is a starting point based on current law and revenue estimates for the next two years. The bad news is that, although the budget includes an increase in operating funding for public universities, it doesn't go nearly far enough to keep tuition increases for undergrad students in Oregon below 5% next year nor does it provide enough resources to fund staff and faculty.

For the Universities that means we need \$857 Million for the upcoming biennium to meet Current Service Level Needs. Without meeting basic CSL- institutions will face a significant shortfall that can only be closed with a combination of huge tuition increases and cuts to

services, programs, and faculty & staff. On April 5 the OSU Board of Trustees will vote on tuition increases. We have heard that because of the current funding shortfall staff and departments are facing cuts, furloughs or layoffs.

This year the legislature has an opportunity to reverse the legacy of divesting from public education. As my grandson Attlee prepares for kindergarten next year, he's depending on you! Let's reverse course for our next generation of students. SEIU joins many voices in the state calling on our lawmakers to raise revenue for new investment money for education this biennium. Thank you.

Leonora Rianda, OS2 – President - SEIU Sub Local 083

Chris Kulah, Senior Nuclear Reactor Operator – Vice President - SEIU Sub Local 083

Gloria O'Brien, Bio Science Research Tech 3 – Chief Steward – SEIU Sub Local 083

Deborah Carroll, Library Tech 3 – Membership Coordinator – SEIU Sub Local 083

Lynn Thompson, Cook 1 - Secretary – SEIU Sub Local 083

Roxy Tacy, Grants Technician – Treasurer – SEIU Sub Local 083

April 2, 2019

To: Education Subcommittee of Ways and Means Co-chairs Sen Lew Frederick and Rep Susan McLain and Members of the Committee.

My name is Nilda Pena and I am a proud member of SEIU and an officer in our classified workers' local union. I was born and raised in Klamath Falls and have been working for OIT since July 2017. I provide accounting services and training to campus administrators; managers and other staff. I really like my job. It may be behind the scenes, but it is one of the many jobs we do that are necessary to keep the campus moving forward.

As you know SEIU represents about 4500 classified workers on the seven Public University campuses. Our work is critical to support student success in classrooms and with frontline services that they need.

But we also see Higher Education issues from a second perspective – over half of our 80,000 SEIU statewide members are low wage earners; most without health care and retirement benefits. They and their families know that post-secondary training and education is the way out of poverty. We want to make sure as you do that Public Higher Education is affordable.

I am a single mother of three children and I recently graduated from the Colorado Technical University with a Bachelors Degree in Business Administration – Management. A degree is important to finding a living wage job to support a family in Oregon in 2019. I am glad I went back to school.

As a recent college graduate I know that students and their families have seen tuition skyrocketing because of low level of State support. We must get this under control and reverse the disinvestment legacy. SEIU joins many voices in the state calling on our lawmakers to raise revenue for new investment money for education this biennium. It is time for corporations to pay their fair share.

Kay Parrish is an office manager supporting the Communication Dept at OIT and is a fellow leader with our SEIU Local 090. The both of us and our members believe that the Public Universities need at least \$857 Million for the 2019-2021 years. Without meeting basic service levels our institutions will face a significant shortfall that can only be closed with a combination of huge tuition increases and cuts to services, programs, and faculty & staff. For Oregon families - the time is now. Thank you.

Nilda Pena – President – SEIU Local 090 at OIT

Kay Parrish – Secretary – SEIU Local 090 at OIT

April 2, 2019

Co-chairs of the Education Subcommittee of Ways and Means – Senator
Law Frederick; Representative Susan McLain and Committee Members:

We are the officers of Local 089 SEIU's classified workers at Portland State University. We write to remind you that since Measures 5 and 50 were passed by voters in early 90s, Oregon's ability to meet the needs of its residents has suffered, and young people and the most vulnerable have suffered disproportionately. Class sizes have increased, college tuition has spiked, foster children have been warehoused and under-served by case workers with far too many kids to shepherd, and the elderly and people with disabilities desperately in need of services have not always been able to get them.

In public higher education, students feel their opportunities are slipping away and are desperate to control their costs. You have heard the stories of students having to make the choice between eating or paying for books. These are real, we see the students lined up outside the food pantry, and hear them pleading with the university boards you authorized.

Students are asking you to force our public universities to freeze tuition, meanwhile the governor recommended a budget under existing revenues that doesn't cover roll-up costs for benefits or reflect cost of living increases that have already been contractually agreed to with many worker groups. The writing is on the wall for universities - the ones that can have been paying the bills on the backs of non-resident students to the detriment of enrolling more qualified Oregon students, the rest have been increasingly outsourcing instruction to adjuncts, but are running out of ways to economize without hurting both enrollment and student success. Front line workers like us have been feeling it too - a quarter of full-time SEIU represented higher education workers are still eligible for food stamps to feed their families.

Every two years for the past decade you've heard variations on the same message - we have a tax system that's volatile, unbalanced, and doesn't bring in enough revenue to meet demonstrated needs. Personal income taxes are too high for lower and many middle income earners. With no sales tax and a low effective corporate tax rate, when the economy tightens revenues plummet. Even when the economy is doing well, the cuts are less deep, but more often than not, there are still cuts. Will this be the year

that Oregon asks the large corporations that rely on the infrastructure and educated workforce paid for largely out of our personal income taxes to step up their contribution towards these necessities?

Each session we hear from the business lobby that costs must first be cut. But cutting costs does not change their refrain. Costs were cut in 1995. Costs were cut in 2003. Retirement costs for those hired after 2003 are not responsible for the UAL, but corporate interests would have the state take from these younger workers to balance the books - while state business tax receipts are less than the amount collected via the Oregon lottery and they benefit from a federal tax windfall. We're hearing them say that \$1B a year is "too much." Oregon has the second lowest corporate tax rate across all sources in the nation after Oklahoma, and raising an additional **\$2B** a year, double the amount they object to, wouldn't get us out of the bottom 10 states.

What will it take to fully fund K-12 education, invest in higher education and cap tuition increases at the rate of inflation, cover the state's health care costs, and provide the quality services that people expect when they pay one of the highest state personal income tax rates in the country? Business interests have made their message clear - for them the answer is "too much" - an unsubtle warning that they will refer any real corporate tax reform to voters and spend tens of millions attempting to defeat it. We ask that you trust voters by passing strong legislation that **fully** funds K-12, gives low and middle income earners a break, holds Oregon small businesses harmless while holding big business accountable, and brings stability and predictability to a tax system that has lacked both for decades. Oregonians are ready for smart legislation that helps fix our broken tax system and funds schools. It took 30 years to get this chance. Please, take it.

SEIU Local 503 Chapter 89, PSU
Bill Harris, President
Xavier Oberlander, Vice-President
Rob Fullmer, Treasurer
Samuel Huck, Secretary
Rhett Sullivan, Co-Lead Steward
Shayne Stone, Co-Lead Steward

April 2, 2019

Co-Chairs of the Education Subcommittee of Ways and Means - Sen Lew Frederick; Rep Susan McLain and Committee Members:

We are David Raco, Barbara Henson, Colleen Martin-Low, Bob Sexton, Kay Swader, Gretchen Woelke, and Stephen Lanning, and we are the elected leaders of the classified staff union at Southern Oregon University, SEIU 503 Sublocal 84. We live with our families in Jackson County area and we care deeply about the University; its students and our communities.

SEIU 503 represents about 4,500 classified staff in the higher education sector, we represent approximately 200 staff at Southern Oregon University, and many of us are concerned about the situation we see developing.

We are submitting this testimony for your consideration because our state is currently not funding higher education to an adequate level while big businesses and corporations continue to benefit from our incredibly low corporate tax rates. We firmly believe that Oregon's future depends as much—and more—upon the success of our learners as it does upon the success of businesses, for what would the businesses of the 21st century be without the graduates of our institutes of higher learning? An investment in the college graduates of tomorrow is an investment in a better future for our children, our families, our economy, and ultimately our entire society.

Governor Kate Brown's recommended budget does not represent such an investment. It falls \$120 million short of funding higher education in the state of Oregon at current service level—the level of investment required just to continue doing what we were already doing. It requires our universities to make a terrible decision between scaling back what classes and services we offer and raising tuition on our students far in excess of the rate of inflation. This pattern of scaling back what we offer at our universities while simultaneously charging more than ever is unsustainable and unjustifiable given the unprecedented level of prosperity being enjoyed by big businesses and Wall Street. It is time that we make the case for the return on investment potential of a world class education, and it is time that we put a stop to profiteering that is detrimental to Oregonians and our students.

Students at our universities are being forced to drop out because they cannot afford a higher education and the basic necessities simultaneously. Other students remain but only manage to do so by accepting a standard of living that no student should have to endure while pursuing a higher education, such as living out of their car and skipping meals on a regular basis to be able to afford textbooks and supplies. Even our students who are able to afford for both security and an education are paying too high a price for it later in life, in many cases, due to the burden of high-interest loans.

Meanwhile, our staff are overworked due to cutbacks and layoffs, and a significant number of us are not paid enough to survive on a single job anymore. One in five classified staff in our union qualify for Food Stamps, and many of them with children are worried that they will not be able to afford to send them to college, or they are actively struggling to send them to college by working second and third jobs. Those who have their reasons to try to blame public employees for the "cost problem" like to cite extraordinarily atypical examples of retired public employees collecting six figures from PERS, and the cost of our healthcare benefits through PEBB (as though those benefits were on top of, rather than a part of, our total benefits package) as evidence that overcompensated and underproductive public

employees are the “real problem.” Such people have their own agenda that is not aligned with public service, and they have clearly never met or spoken with a classified custodian who works two jobs on top of his graveyard shift because he wants to send all of his kids to college, or an office specialist who has to juggle the workload of two people because of downsizing within her department, or any number of classified staff who are thrown into their jobs with little to no training (and too often also little to no respect) and are then expected to work tirelessly for the public good while anti-union, anti-government voices funded by wealthy donors who offer no state their allegiance disparage them and attempt to persuade the public, and lawmakers, that they are the “real problem” and as such do not deserve a living wage, health benefits, or economic security after retirement. These people have a First Amendment right to be heard, but so do we, and we hope that in the final analysis you will believe us when we say that we want all Oregonians to prosper as a result of our service, not just ourselves. But if any of us are to prosper in the long term, we must cease divesting higher education and instead make an investment in the next generation by ensuring that all education in our state remains affordable and accessible.

To achieve the financial stability necessary to make that investment in our students and schools, additional revenue is required. If Oregon is serious about improving our high school graduation rate, reducing student debt, achieving greater economic fairness, and creating better opportunities for businesses to flourish, we must allocate at least \$857 Million to the Public University Support Fund. We hope you will agree upon reviewing all of the facts and considering all of the perspectives present in this admittedly complex issue.

Sincerely,

David Raco, Barbara Henson, Colleen Martin-Low, Bob Sexton, Kay Swader, Gretchen Woelke, and Stephen Lanning

SOU represented Classified Staff from SEIU Local 084

April 2, 2019

To Members of the Education Sub Committee on Ways and Means.

We, the proud members of our union SEIU 503, represent more than 80,000 working members across the state of Oregon.

In Higher Education SEIU represents about 4500 classified employees across the seven Public Universities in Oregon. Our Sublocal 085 at the University of Oregon (“UO”) represents approximately 1,600 classified employees.

We are administrative support specialists, custodians, food service workers, IT workers, carpenters, electricians, accountants, assistants. We support many areas like the library, the law school, athletics, academic departments, and other units around campus. We take care of our students by making sure they receive health care at the Student Health Center, we ensure our students have access to materials from the library so they can obtain research materials, and to provide services to students and administration. Our work is crucial to support student success inside and outside the classroom by providing front-line services they need.

Our jobs provide not just for ourselves and our families and but also contribute significantly to our local communities and statewide economy. Many of our members are low wage earners, some making less than \$15 an hour. Furthermore, our members know that training and continuing education is the way out of economic hardship and that lack of accessibility to higher education is a challenge for future students and our communities. We want to make sure, as you do, that Public Higher Education is affordable and accessible for all Oregonians.

Many of us are college graduates. We know that students and their families have seen tuition skyrocket because of low State investment. It is imperative that we work together to keep this issue under control to reverse the disinvestment legacy. In this moment, more than ever, SEIU 503 along with many voices in the State are calling on our lawmakers to figure out ways to raise revenue for new investment in education this biennium. It is time for large corporations to pay their fair share.

For the Universities, that investment means \$857 Million for our public Universities for the 2019-2021 biennium. Without meeting basic service levels our institutions will face a significant shortfall that can only be closed with a combination of huge tuition increases and cuts to services, programs, and faculty & staff. For Oregon families - the time is now for action to invest in protecting Higher Education. Help to shape Oregon’s future by ensuring affordable higher education and producing the leaders of our future. Thank you.

SEIU Sub Local 085 Executive Committee:

Louie Vidmar; Stephanie Prentiss; Lynne Harrell; Johnny Earl; Lisa Roberts; Jason Stone; Lois Yoshishige; Theodora ko Thompson; Gary Malone

