

**April 18, 2019**

**Co-Chairs of the Education Subcommittee of Ways and Means – Senator Lew Frederick;  
Representative Susan McLain and Committee Members:**

My name is Joy'e Willman and I reside in Portland, Oregon. I am speaking for myself as well as our 80,000 SEIU Local 503 and 49 union members in Oregon who want to create a just and vibrant society where everyone is treated with dignity and respect, and where all people can provide for themselves and their families.

I am writing to speak out in favor of one very special Public University State Public Service Program which is the Labor Education and Research Center (LERC).

When I first joined the SEIU 503 we didn't have a lot of training on how to be a union steward; how to file a grievance or what the real meaning of Bargaining a contract was all about. I was invited to go to a LERC Summer School and the time I spent there was so educational and valuable in my understanding of how our Homecare Union should be formed and what the expectations were for our Bargaining unit. Since that time that I am the only person that has been on the Bargaining team for each of the 10 contracts we have bargained. I think that the LERC programs are essential and they gave me and our members confidence that now have helped us bring thousands of Homecare Workers and Personal Support Workers into our union.

A few years ago LERC put together resources to tell the story of Homecare in Oregon. I was asked to be in the interviews and later the documentary called "Care Revolution". It covers the history of Homecare and the struggles and personal stories of not only our workers but clients and consumers as well. After many summer school programs working with our members - LERC instructors understood the importance of capturing Homecare's history. It is now housed in the Library of Congress in Wash D.C. for all to see and learn from. The documentary is linked here: <https://vimeo.com/262551351>

LERC provides that continuity of training and comradery to know we are not alone in this struggle for equality in the work force. Our people find their trainings a turning point for them to truly understand how important our jobs are and that we are a valuable part of society and the workforce. We are thankful that they cared enough to help us tell our story.

In closing I just want to say that we at SEIU do not want to see the LERC program cut for any reason. Please save the LERC program so that others can become stronger in their belief that they are worthwhile and deserve to be treated with respect - and we really are as the documentary describes - "Invisible No More."

Thank You

Joy'e Willman, Portland, Oregon