

**April 18, 2019**

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

For the record my name is Tammy Tate-Houdroge. I am a professional caregiver to people with disabilities and a member-leader of SEIU Local 503. I am also an engaged voter and longtime resident of Senate District 22 and House District 44 in Portland.

I had the wonderful opportunity to attend a LERC training last summer. The whole experience moved me to tears. One moment during my time on campus happened as I walked through the lobby into some college dorms to see this heart-wrenching picture exhibit of all the African American men and woman killed by violence in this country. It put names with faces and stories of young promising lives gunned down way to soon. I became overcome with emotion. As I walked I began to grieve. How could such things happen on our city streets? I knew from that point on my life wouldn't ever quite be the same.

I knew from that point on that I wanted to be more involved in my community. LERC was the place for me to develop social activism skills. To help empower my community in Portland and beyond. To be a better leader within my union. LERC helped me develop my voice to challenge issues that I alone was afraid to take on. I learned that I wasn't alone and many issues of social injustice could be fixed. I learned the values of being part of a team — something much bigger than myself. I enjoyed sharing experiences from other union workers, about jobs and fairness and tales of trouble.

We still have such a long way yet to go in equity on job sites and in our communities. I enjoyed meeting with other leaders, learning strategies to empower ourselves and seek justice. I learned tools to become a better public speaker and strategist around workplace conflicts. I learned about how important it is to be a good shop steward and advocate to my coworkers and my community. I am asking on behalf of SEIU 503 and 49 — 80,000 members strong across Oregon — to please allow our Labor Education and Research Center to forge ahead, stronger than ever. Please don't let our public university fail working-class Oregonians.