



# Service Employees International Union, Local 503, OPEU

May 6, 2019

Chair Margaret Doherty; Vice Chair Teresa Alonso Leon; Vice Chair Cherie Helt and members of the House Education Committee.

SEIU is writing in support of SB 859 a bill that would exempt graduate students at public universities who qualify for tuition equity from having to pay nonresident tuition. This policy would follow in the footsteps of past efforts to grant Oregon students affordable access to graduate studies at a time when we want to maximize our educational investments.

We are reminded of past improvements for Oregonian students beginning in 2013 with HB 2787; and then in 2015 SB 932; and then in 2018 session and SB 1563 where tuition equity measures were put into place. These are common sense efforts that have produced results. By allowing qualifying graduate students access to in-state tuition rates, SB 859 will only continue this trend.

SEIU Local 503 represents about 4500 classified employees at the seven public universities - doing many of the jobs that keep the institutions running to successfully support and educate our students. We work in the libraries; admission and accounting offices; providing academic department support; nutrition; health; childcare and legal work - and maintain buildings and grounds. We keep the heat and lights on.

We also represent 65,000 other members across the state - middle and lower income Oregonians - who often find themselves; their children and grandchildren either priced out of college or going deeply in debt to afford post-secondary education.

So, we bring both those perspectives of caring for student success, as well as faculty and staff interests on campuses - and ask the House Education committee to favorably pass out this important measure to provide equity and affordability to Oregonian grad students. Thank you.

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