



AFSCME Supports
HB 2965

March 23, 2021

Dear Chair Prusak, Vice-Chairs Hayden and Salinas and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 2965, to change the date that local public health authorities need to submit their public health modernization implementation plans from 2023 to 2025. We thank our partners at the Coalition of Local Health Officials and Representative Nosse for bringing this bill forward.

Oregon AFSCME Council 75 represents local public health workers in many of Oregon's counties. They are the people who inspect restaurants and public pools who have moved over to contact tracing during the pandemic, they are the nurses who work in nurse home visiting programs like Universal Home Visiting and work in public health clinics. They are the people who have always coordinated with community partners in distributing vaccines, a large undertaking in any year, especially monumental in the last few months. They are also the people who work with community partners in education and prevention on issues ranging from tobacco use prevention and cessation, and prevention of communicable diseases. They are the epidemiologists and other public employees that are doing community health assessments, data analysis for epidemiology and many other duties. Most of our public health employees work across multiple program areas in what should be multiple positions.

As you can tell, public health is people powered and public health workers have been wearing multiple hats and working across programs for years - doing what they can with what they have. Modernization is about making sure that public health has the funds and the policy infrastructure to do the work needed as it comes up, as well as maintain the work that remains constant. Modernization is about building long term resiliency in the system and to do that we must invest in resiliency in the workforce.

The framework for public health modernization that was adopted in 2015 through HB 3100, requires additional investment in the prevention focused workforce and as of yet we have not received



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the full investments needed from the federal and state government. Moving the date will give all of us the time we need to continue to implement the modernization framework.

Oregon AFSCME Council 75 urges your support and passage of HB 2965. I welcome any questions.

In Unity,

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