

**Testimony of Bob Bussel**

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Co-Chairs Frederick and McClain and Members of the Committee. My name is Bob Bussel. I am the director of the Labor Education and Research Center (LERC), a state public program housed at the University of Oregon since 1978. We are the only program in Oregon's higher education system that examines work and economic issues with the needs and interests of workers as its guiding lens.

This perspective has never been more critical as we grapple with the twin crises of the COVID-19 pandemic and our country's long overdue racial reckoning.

Here are a few examples that outline the thrust of our recent work. Early on during COVID-19, we helped form and participated in a Construction Safety Task Force to help workers stay safe while performing the industry's essential work.

LERC faculty have published a series of widely cited reports assessing the impact of COVID-19 on frontline essential workers. We have also produced studies assessing the impact of Oregon's predictable scheduling and prevailing wage laws, along with research on the care economy, apprenticeship, and a forthcoming study on the contributions of immigrants to the state's economy.

Our educational programming helps prepare workers to become effective advocates in both their workplaces and communities. This year, we have offered new online trainings on best

practices in collective bargaining under COVID-19 conditions. We launched a webinar series examining the intersection of racial justice and worker advocacy and we intend to follow up with training on promoting racial equity in both workplace and organizational settings. We are fully prepared to help a new generation of leaders meet the challenges of the post-pandemic workplace.

Our work exemplifies the public mission of the HECC and the University of Oregon. With your continued support, LERC is poised to expand its role as a trusted partner and collaborator with unions, community organizations, workers, and policy makers throughout Oregon as we build a more resilient, inclusive, and equitable post-pandemic economy.