



Service Employees International Union – Oregon State Council

6401 SE Foster ▪ Portland, OR 97206

To: House Committee on Revenue

On: February 11, 2021

Re: House Bill 2839, Support

Dear Chair Nathanson, Vice-Chairs Pham and Reschke, and members of the committee,

My name is Courtney Graham and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of SEIU in support of House Bill 2839, which would disconnect Oregon from certain federal tax provisions.

SEIU is an 85,000 member union in Oregon and SW Washington and a 2 million member union nationally. Sixty percent of SEIU 503's members earn less than \$40,000/year, and the majority of SEIU 49's members are low-wage workers. Our members are janitors, health care workers, care providers, public workers, and more. They are hard-working people who pay their fair share of taxes and contribute to our public services.

Oregon is grappling with numerous crises as we enter 2021. COVID-19 has significantly impacted our economy, resulting in job losses that disproportionately impact women and people of color and have strained our unemployment system, small businesses have closed, there have been significant reductions in state revenues, and we have an uncertain path to recovery. What's more, a legacy of racist and discriminatory policies has meant that the impacts of these crises have not been felt equally.

The Legislature cannot balance the budget on the backs of workers and families in these communities, while allowing wealthy taxpayers to benefit. Instead, Oregonians need support - both to survive in the short-term as we continue to grapple with COVID, and to recover and rebuild in the long-term. One way to expand Oregon's capacity to provide this support is to pass the bill under consideration today. Disconnecting from three of the most poorly-targeted provisions of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) - business loss limitation, net operating loss expansion, and business interest deductions - would result in an additional \$84 million in critical resources for the state's budget at a time of fiscal challenges. These tax breaks have benefited a small group of mostly white, wealthy individuals, not the vast majority of Oregonians.

The choice for lawmakers is clear: invest in Oregonians. Rather than spending valuable state dollars on tax breaks for the wealthy, the Legislature needs to take bold, decisive action to dedicate significant resources to programs and initiatives that meet the needs of Oregonians who have been most impacted by the dual economic and public health crises COVID has caused - Black, Indigenous, People of Color; women; immigrants; seniors; people with disabilities; and low-income Oregonians.

We urge your support for House Bill 2839.