

Support for HB 3028

Civic Duty for Statutorily Created State Boards, Commissions and Committees

February 1, 2023

Dear Chair Holvey, Vice Chairs Elmer and Sosa and members of House Business and Labor,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 3028. My name is Christy O'Neill, I am now a Child Care Trainer and Mentor with Provider Services Fund however, before taking this position, I was a teacher in a Head Start in Southern Oregon and a *member leader of AFSCME Local 2619, First Vice President with Oregon AFSCME Council 75 and the Secretary Treasurer of the Oregon AFL-CIO*. It is from these combined experiences and perspectives that I am providing support for HB 3028, *civic duty protections* for members of Oregon's boards, commissions and committees.

There are many reasons we should be **reducing barriers** for participation in our government. We continue to find ways to make voting more accessible, **and** we should **encourage** civic participation beyond election day by opening up opportunities **to serve on** Oregon's boards, commissions and committees. HB 3028 addresses **one** barrier many people face when considering whether *or not* to apply to serve on a state board, commission, or committee - **needing to take time off of work**. While theoretically, anyone could **ask** for time off and possibly be required to use vacation or other paid time off to serve, **most** employees in Oregon do not have the privilege of having jobs that would consider *serving on a state rulemaking or policy making committee* **an extension of their jobs**. This means that many who serve in *these roles* are directors or managers of businesses, agencies, and programs. **This isn't necessarily bad**, but it **does** limit the perspectives that are provided in decision making *in our state* and **excludes** those who may know the impact on day to day work or ability to access services.

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As a union member, I was asked on several occasions if I would be interested in applying to serve on a committee or council, specifically the Early Learning Council or one of their committees. I certainly had the background professionally to know the kinds of support the workforce in early childhood and **families accessing** those services need. I also had connections with licensed family child care providers and many who work in other human services and health care that intersect with early learning and child care through my leadership positions at Oregon AFSCME and Oregon AFL-CIO. However, to serve, I would need my employer's approval to take the time to attend meetings and would likely be required to use one of my few days of PTO per school year. *When I asked* others with similar qualifications, or for gauging interest in *other state boards or commissions* they were also uncertain about whether they would be granted the time off , and if they would be **required** to use vacation or other paid time off.

Of course, my level of access, and being asked to apply and participate is a layer of privilege that many other employees do not have. As we look to address long standing inequities in our government policies and programs *generally*, we should be looking at all the ways to reduce the barriers for people to participate in making those needed changes. **HB 3028 reduces the barrier of being able to take the time from work to participate in Oregon's citizen government. I urge your support.**