



STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF SB 283

February 14th, 2023

Dear Chair Dembrow, Vice Chair Weber, and members of the Senate Committee on Education :

We thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 283 with the -3 amendment, which would direct the Oregon Department of Education to address the workforce shortage in K-12 education.

UFCW Local 555 is the largest private sector labor union in Oregon. Our members come from a number of industries, including grocery, retail, food processing, manufacturing, and healthcare. We are a diverse group of workers who take pride in acting as a strong collective voice for working people.

We are proud to stand in solidarity with OSEA, educators, and classified staff in support of SB 283 and the -3 amendment. While UFCW 555 doesn't represent members in education, many of our members are lower wage workers who face similar challenges as OSEA's members.

This bill does much to address the critical workforce shortage in education, giving educators and classified staff a seat at the table, and raising standards for workers in Oregon's K-12 schools. We are supportive of the measures taken in this bill, and want to particularly highlight the inclusion of Just Cause protections for classified school staff.

Just Cause protection for workers is critical— preventing a worker from being fired without a justifiable reason for termination. Without this basic protection, workers are extremely vulnerable to the whims of a disagreeable supervisor or other unpredictable occurrence. As a result, these jobs experience higher turnover, lack of investments in training, and place undue stress on the workers. By providing this basic protection, we can help to stabilize these jobs, and provide workers with peace of mind.

Our members rely on educators and classified school staff to support their children, and support the academic, mental, emotional, social, behavioral, physical, and communication needs of all Oregon's students from early childhood learning and K-12, through community college. Investing in this workforce, and providing them the tools they need to succeed and thrive, is vital not only for these workers, but for all Oregonians.

We urge your support of SB 283 -3.

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