

March 6, 2023

House Committee on Education  
Representative Courtney Neron, Chair

RE: HB 3383

Chair Neron and Members of the House Committee on Education,

When I first started as a classified employee a seasoned classified staff told me, "...well Chels, classified employees are like mushrooms we get the leftovers and we're kept in the dark". As a member of the Oregon School Employees Association, I can assure you that while that may have long been the culture in public education, classified employees are no longer accepting that. Like over 23,000 OSEA members in every corner of this state, I wake up and go to work to serve my community and the kids that I love working with. We transport students. We feed students. We greet students in the morning. We help their families. We manage the facilities that they use daily.

Countless classified workers put into action plans and initiatives developed by state committees. I hate to break it to you all, but sometimes these plans and initiatives - while well intended, simply do not work. I believe that policy development is more durable with greater diversity at the table. If I had a penny for each time our members had to adapt on the fly to compensate for a state-level decision that didn't quite pan out, I might have enough money to fund public education in Oregon, including living wages for our members.

This is why I, as a member of OSEA, strongly encourage you to vote yes on Senate Bill 3383. There's a wealth of knowledge and experience among classified employees. We are the ones who truly keep our schools running for hundreds of thousands of students we love and show up for daily. Students who live in your districts, and who are the future of our state.

As professional educators, we have a right and responsibility to our kids to not only have a seat at that table, but to help build solutions for a stronger Oregon. If our collective goal is to best serve, prepare, and nurture the success of our students, then key groups that facilitate the journey from early childhood learning through high school, should be involved in the planning and implementation of the solutions. We can proactively share the realities of our daily lived experiences as classified employees. We're ready and willing. You just need to give us a chair.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Chelsea Shotts  
OSEA Board Member, Zone 1