

**Date:** February 25th, 2025

**To:** House Committee on Higher Education and Workforce Development

**From:** Chris Case, SEIU Member

**Re:** Support for HB 3213: Public University Foundation Sunshine Act

Chair Hudson, Vice Chair Fragala, Vice Chair Harbick, and members of the House Higher Education Committee,

My name is Chris Case, and I am a classified staff member at the University of Oregon, where I work with the Pathway Oregon program. Every day, I interact with students who are deeply committed to their education but are also deeply worried about how they will afford it. They see higher education as a pathway to financial stability and opportunity, and programs like Pathway Oregon reflect our university's commitment to supporting low-income students in achieving their goals.

Despite our program's success, we are constantly struggling for funding. And as we uplift these students, there remains a significant gap in transparency around how university foundations—who manage billions of dollars in donor contributions—prioritize spending. Students, faculty, and staff have little insight into how these funds are allocated, despite the fact that they directly impact student scholarships, academic programs, and institutional priorities.

Public universities rely on public trust. But without public accountability, we have no way of knowing whether these funds are truly being used in ways that best serve students, workers, and the broader university community.

We see the effects of this financial secrecy every day on our campuses. Right now, two unions at UO are in the midst of bargaining, and SEIU's bargaining begins next year. Time and again, we hear the same refrain from administrators: there is simply no money to raise wages, improve working conditions, or invest in staff retention. Under current law, we have to take their word for it—and that word, unfortunately, is no longer compelling.

This bill is not about dictating how universities spend their money. It is about transparency. It ensures that the public, students, faculty, and staff can see how financial decisions are being made and whether they align with the stated mission of our universities. Public universities carry the name of our state, rely on public trust, and should be accountable to the communities they serve.

As someone who works with students every day. I urge you to support this bill and bring Oregon in line with other states that have recognized the importance of public accountability in higher education. Please support HB 3213 with the -1 Amendment.

Thank you for your time.