

Chair Grayber, Vice-Chairs Munoz and Scharf, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Miles Larson and I'm here on behalf of the Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA), representing 25,000 classified school employees across Oregon. We strongly support House Bill 4094.

I want to emphasize that this is a bill about earned compensation and basic fairness—that is especially important in K-12 schools, where classified employees often have the least flexibility but carry some of the biggest responsibilities.

OSEA members are Oregon's school bus drivers, cafeteria and nutrition staff, instructional assistants and paraprofessionals, custodians, maintenance staff, office professionals, and many others. They're the folks who unlock the doors in the morning, get kids safely to school, serve breakfast and lunch, support students in classrooms, keep buildings clean and operational, and keep the front office running.

When people talk about "vacation," it can sound like a perk. But for our members, paid vacation time is not a luxury add-on. It's part of what workers earn, hour by hour, paycheck by paycheck, through their labor. It's a benefit that workers count on for rest, family obligations, emergencies, and stability. When that time goes unused, it doesn't become meaningless. It remains earned compensation.

House Bill 4094 recognizes that reality. If an employer chooses to provide paid vacation, and an employee earns that time, then when employment ends—whether through retirement, a layoff, a resignation, or a non-renewal—the employee should not lose what they've already earned.

In plain terms: if you earned it, you should keep it, either as time off or as pay. That principle matters in every workplace, but it hits especially hard in schools for a few reasons.

Classified school jobs are coverage-dependent and tied to the school calendar: the bus route still has to run, meals still have to be served, classrooms still need support, and buildings still must be cleaned and maintained. When staffing is thin, taking time off often isn't realistic, especially during key periods like the start and end of the year, testing windows, and weather events. That's why many OSEA members bank vacation not because they're refusing to take a break, but because the workplace can't easily spare them, and that banked time represents earned compensation. For long-serving classified employees who retire after years or decades of service, losing that earned vacation at separation isn't a technicality, it's money out of a working family's pocket, at the exact moment they most need stability.

From a workforce perspective, this bill supports retention. Classified employees are in short supply in many parts of Oregon. We need to keep good people in school jobs. A fair and predictable system that respects earned benefits helps.

So OSEA strongly supports HB 4094 because it aligns with what classified employees experience on the ground: they earn this time, and they should not lose it simply because employment ends.

It's worth noting that OSEA supports the -1 amendment because we understand the 300-hour cap addresses specific concerns and it includes provisions that allow collective bargaining for our members that go above and beyond these statutes.

In closing, OSEA urges you to advance HB 4094 because it's a fairness bill for the working people who keep Oregon's schools functioning. It ensures that when school employees earn paid vacation through their labor, that earned compensation is honored when their employment ends—so long-serving classified staff can retire or move on with the security of knowing they will receive the full value of what they have already earned. Thank you for your time.