

Submitter: Devon Lawson  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Education  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4066  
Chair Frederick, Vice-Chair Weber, and Members of the Committee:

For the record, my name is Devon Lawson. I am testifying today in opposition to HB 4066 in its current form.

This is an omnibus bill that hides two dangerous policies inside a wrapper of good governance. While I strongly support the provisions giving stipends to ESD board members, which allow working-class people to serve in local government, I cannot support the provisions that silence workers at OHSU and dilute equity in our school districts.

I urge you to amend the bill to remove these "poison pills."

The bill prohibits the student member of the OHSU Board from participating in executive sessions regarding collective bargaining.

This implies that a student worker cannot separate their personal interest from their fiduciary duty. We do not ban business owners on boards from discussing tax policy. Why do we ban workers from discussing labor policy? This is a move by management to shut "labor" out of the room where decisions happen.

This creates a "second-class" board member. It allows the OHSU administration to operate in secrecy, hiding its bargaining strategy from a fully appointed member of the governing body. If there is a specific conflict of interest, standard recusal rules apply. We do not need a state statute to protect management from scrutiny.

The bill also allows school districts to exempt themselves from placing an Educational Equity Advisory Committee member on the Budget Committee if they "cannot find" a willing volunteer.

This turns a mandate into a suggestion. If a district cannot find a volunteer, it is likely because it has not done the work to build trust with marginalized communities. Giving them a statutory "out" rewards that failure. It allows districts to return to the status quo, where budgets are decided without an equity lens. We should be offering support to find members, not offering a loophole to exclude them.

The bill delays the report on farmworker labor standards because the university missed its deadline. Farmworkers are the most exploited workforce in Oregon.

Delaying this study tells them that their suffering is less urgent than administrative convenience.

Do not force us to choose between paying ESD board members (which is good) and silencing OHSU student workers (which is bad).

Please amend HB 4066 to strip the OHSU and Equity Committee provisions, and pass the clean bill with the stipends.

Thank you.

While I am a member of the Higher Education Coordinating Commission, my testimony today represents only my personal view and not the position of the HECC.