



February 19, 2026

Good morning Chair Bowman, Vice-chairs, and members of the committee,

My name is Odalis Aguilar Aguilar and I am writing on behalf of Oregon AFSCME. Our union represents over 42,000 workers across the state of which over 10,000 workers work at the Oregon Health and Science University. The workers who work in patient care, administration, food services, facilities, research, academic support are the individuals who carry out the hospital's mission and strive for excellence in education, research and scholarship, clinical practice and community service.

OHSU is globally known for its renowned contributions to science and has the highest standards for patient care and outcomes. This is not achieved by lowering standards or cutting any corners. We, too, share the sentiment of gratitude to the generous gift of donors for the Knight Cancer Institute to continue making groundbreaking discoveries. Our remarks are aimed at ensuring that as the Knight Cancer Institute transitions to become self-governed within OHSU, labor protections are maintained for workers tasked with supporting the hospital's mission.

While we appreciate OHSU General Counsel's assurance that PECBA will apply to the new Knight Cancer Institute, amending ORS 353.117 would ideally make that explicit as it has for other provisions of Oregon law. For example, *ORS 353.117(2) render OHSU-created entities as: public employers for purposes of acquisitions and transfers; units of local government for purposes of intergovernmental cooperation; public bodies for purposes of actions and suits in particular cases; public agencies for purposes of protecting disadvantaged enterprises; and public corporations for purposes of tax exemption.*

The statute is silent, however, regarding the entities' status as public employers for purposes of PECBA. We encourage the legislature to consider amending ORS 353.117(2) to make clear that an OHSU-created entity is a public employer for purposes of ORS 243.650 to 243.809: the Public Employee Collective Bargaining Act. At least one of OHSU's self-described "health partners" is already treated as a private employer subject to the National Labor Relations Act rather than PECBA: Tuality Healthcare doing business as Hillsboro Medical Center. To eliminate further inconsistencies, the law should explicitly subject OHSU-created entities to PECBA and the jurisdiction of Oregon's Employment Relations Board.

We are sympathetic to the timelines that exist during the 2026 short legislative session but also believe that during a time when labor protections are under attack, the legislature seriously consider amending statute to make it clear that employees under this new non-profit governed by a different board have the same protections as the rest of the 10,000 workers at OHSU following Oregon values.