

## **AFT-Oregon Testimony in Support of SB 1543 – Oregon’s Health Care Accountability Act**

The American Federation of Teachers-Oregon represents over 12,000 members across the state. Our members work in the private and public sectors in elementary and high schools, child care centers, and community colleges and four-year colleges. AFT-Oregon represents faculty at Portland Community College, Portland State University, Columbia Gorge Community College, Western Oregon University, Southwestern Oregon Community College, Oregon Coast Community College, Eastern Oregon University and the University of Oregon.

Across the country and in Oregon there has been a shift in higher education, a shift from full-time tenure-track faculty towards an undercompensated and undersupported contingent workforce. Universities and colleges across the state are relying on part-time/adjunct faculty. These faculty members put just as much energy into the classroom as their full-time colleagues, but they are simply expected to do so with less. They are compensated at a lower rate than their full-time employees and don’t earn the same benefits as their full-time counterparts. In part because of this inequity the number of part-time faculty members who are piecing together work at multiple institutions is on the rise.

Part-time faculty working at multiple public institutions should not face an additional barrier when they are looking for healthcare coverage. Faculty members who are working a full-time workload split between Oregon’s public colleges and universities should be counted as the full time employees of the state that they are. Unfortunately this is not happening. SB 1543 would hold Oregon’s colleges and universities to the same standards that we use for other Oregon employers by clarifying how post-secondary employees qualify for healthcare. A mechanism for this already exists in the PERS statute. SB 1543 would simply use that same standard to ensure Oregon’s part-time faculty members who work at more than one institution would have access to healthcare.

Part-time faculty members at Oregon’s post-secondary institutions are working hard to help educate Oregonians. They deserve the same access to healthcare as other Oregonians. AFT-Oregon urges you to support SB 1543.