

Chair Roblan, members of the committee,, my name is John Copp and I'm a 57-year old full-time instructor and Department chair at Columbia Gorge Community College. A year ago last February I developed a heart condition that mimicked something serious. Determining it wasn't life-threatening, but did require a procedure to remove some cells in my heart that were causing it to behave abnormally, cost more than \$50,000 in hospital bills. As a full-time instructor, I enjoy employee-provided health care benefits that picked up most of the cost. That didn't save my life but it did save me from potential bankruptcy.

Ten years ago I was still working as an adjunct instructor. At that time, I taught at CGCC, Tillamook Bay community, PCC, Clark College in Washington, Linfield and anywhere else I could get a job. The work at Tillamook Bay and CGCC was pretty steady and with what I could pickup elsewhere I usually taught between 19 and 20 credit hours per term. That's a 25% greater load than I'm asked to carry as a full-time instructor. I still struggled to make ends meet. When my expenses rose as they did in Novembers when property taxes came due, I was forced to seek additional work. That work ran from bartending to installing phone books at public phones. While that work helped me make ends meet, none of it provided benefits.

As an adjunct instructor, I was ineligible for any benefits despite carrying a greater instructional load than did my full-time brethren. I was fortunate, for most of my life, including the time I spent as an adjunct, I've been generally healthy. A medical issue like the one I had last year could have cost me my home. I certainly didn't have the financial flexibility to be able to handle a problem like the one that arose last year when I was driving from college to college and struggling to make ends meet. By providing me with access to health coverage, a bill SB 702 like would have been a life saver and a financial godsend.

As president of the faculty and staff union at CGCC, I know that many of my colleagues are still facing the struggle to make ends meet and the fear that a health catastrophe will ruin them financially or worse. I urge you to pass SB 702 and bring access to health coverage in line with retirement benefits here in the state of Oregon. You'll be taking another step toward fairness in compensation and another step away from the exploitation of adjunct instructors in the Oregon public education sector. Thank you for your time and listening to my story.