

Chair Roblan and Members of the Senate Education Committee:

My name is Traci Hodgson and I am a history instructor at Chemeketa Community College, president of the faculty association at Chemeketa Community College, and Secretary of the Oregon Education Association Community College Council.

I'm here today to testify in support of SB 702 to allow part-time faculty to receive much-needed health care benefits.

I am a full-time faculty member, and I have the good fortune to receive health care benefits. I have confidence that if one of my children is injured or falls ill, I can take them to the doctor. If I need medical care, I can seek it, without fear of bankrupting my family.

Many of my part-time colleagues are not so fortunate.

Community colleges and universities in Oregon and across the nation are increasingly relying on part time faculty to teach their students. Possessing Master's or Ph.D. degrees, but forced to accept part-time employment, part-time faculty seek to piece together a living by teaching at multiple institutions. So the reality is that many of these so-called "part-time" faculty actually teach full time, or close to full time. They just happen to teach classes at multiple institutions. I work with several such faculty, these "road scholars" who travel up and down the freeway or highway between workplaces as they teach students at different campuses.

Many live near the poverty level as they pursue their passion of educating the next generation of workers and citizens. And in many if not most cases, these faculty have trouble accessing or affording health care for themselves and the families they support. You may see recent headlines about a University of California at Berkeley Center for Labor Research and Education report that found that 25% of part-time faculty in California are forced to access some form of public assistance to make ends meet.¹ Based on my knowledge of part-time faculty in Oregon, that is likely the case in our state as well.

SB 702 seems a common sense and frankly, overdue, remedy for public servants who have been senselessly cut out of receiving a basic workplace right simply because they split their time between more than one institution.

This bill still requires faculty to pay a portion of their health care, and an even larger percentage of their family's health care, but it will offer them some much needed security.

You have before you an opportunity to address a serious problem, to right this wrong, and to allow hard-working professional educators who serve our public institutions receive health care commensurate with the amount of time they work for public institutions of education.

Please pass SB 702 and help part time faculty and their families receive the health care benefits they need and deserve.

¹ Ken Jacobs, Ian Perry and Jenifer MacGillvary, *The High Public Cost of Low Wages: Poverty-Level Wages Cost U.S. Taxpayers \$152.8 Billion Each year in Public Support for Working Families*, April 2015, <http://laborcenter.berkeley.edu/pdf/2015/the-high-public-cost-of-low-wages.pdf>.