

April 16, 2015

Dear Chair Holvey and Members of the House Committee on Business and Labor,

My name is Matt Davies, and I am an adjunct instructor of religion at Chemeketa Community College. I also serve as the representative for part-time and adjunct faculty on our Chemeketa Faculty Association. I am writing in favor of HB 3508, and I strongly urge passage of this important and necessary bill.

As adjunct faculty members at our state's public institutions of higher education, we endure a host of economic and labor injustices. Part-time and adjunct faculty are often not paid for office hours, course preparation, grading, syllabus writing, meeting and communicating with students, or departmental meetings, to name only few mandated but uncompensated tasks. We often share offices with dozens of colleagues, making working with students one-on-one a difficult endeavor, one that negatively impacts student learning. We get paid only for the hours we stand inside a classroom, yet even that pay is indexed at a significantly lower rate than full-time faculty who provide the same service and education. This means that a large portion of part-time and adjunct faculty across the state are compensated near the poverty level, an unfair expectation to place on our higher education professors and instructors. Finally, pertinent to HB 3508, part-time and adjunct faculty are hired without guaranteed contracts. We can be fired or not have our contracts renewed for any reason, and full-time faculty may appropriate our courses whenever they wish to teach above and beyond their full-time load. Too frequently, part-time and adjunct faculty are hired a mere week before the beginning of a term, making course preparation difficult and economic planning impossible, due especially to the contingent nature of our labor. Similarly, our courses may be cancelled even after the beginning of the term, meaning that without guaranteed contracts, we may suddenly and inexplicably find ourselves unemployed when we had, a week before, been given employment.

House Bill 3508 begins to address one of these labor injustices, namely the contingent nature of our summer employment. While not all part-time and adjunct faculty teach during summer terms, many, myself included, have come to depend on summer teaching to simply make ends meet. Expecting the higher education of our state's students to reside on such contingent employment is unjust. Furthermore, contingent labor practice sends a message that our public educators are not valued, for how can an educator feel worth when labor and financial uncertainty create the foundation of our employment? House Bill 3508 will begin to correct this.

I strongly urge passage of HB 3508.

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