



**SOUTHWESTERN OREGON COMMUNITY COLLEGE
FEDERATION OF TEACHERS LOCAL 3190**

**SOUTHWESTERN OREGON COMMUNITY COLLEGE
COOS BAY, OREGON 97420**

March 23, 2017

Chair Roblan and Members of the Senate Committee on Education:

My name is Bernadette Kapocias and I am a faculty member at Southwestern Oregon Community College (SWOCC) in Coos Bay, Oregon, and a constituent of Senator Roblan. I am also the President of the SWOCC Federation of Teachers, a local of AFT-Oregon. Our union represents approximately 55 employees at SWOCC.

I'm testifying today in favor of Senate Bill 196, because I know firsthand what it's like to be a community college instructor. I also know that in our higher education system in Oregon has continually turned away from full time tenure track faculty and turned toward heavily relying on graduate teachers, non-tenure, and part-time faculty.

According to the Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC), at 12 of 17 community colleges in Oregon, part time faculty make up 70% or more of the instructional staff. The challenge is that many part time faculty have to work at multiple institutions in order to cobble together a living. They are paid less than full time tenure track colleagues, they often lack an office space on campus, and they often spend their days driving from campus to campus. In rural areas where working at multiple institutions isn't an option, part time faculty often work additional part-time jobs outside of their field.

On top of those challenges, many part time faculty members in Oregon lack access to affordable health insurance. Despite teaching a full course load at multiple institutions, many part time faculty cannot even access their employer's insurance plans. When you consider the rapid rise in housing costs in many areas in Oregon, that only adds to the burden that a part time faculty member must carry with them in to the classroom each day.

If Oregon is truly going to achieve progress on student outcomes, meet goals like 40-40-20, and continue to educate and train our next generation of workers, we must be able to attract and retain talented people to the profession. No one chooses this line of work to get rich, but nor should dedicated teachers have to live in poverty or declare bankruptcy because of an unexpected illness or injury.

Oregon already has existing structures to identify and track part time faculty and their hours worked. Oregon also already has existing health insurance programs – PEBB and OEBB – that are available to full time faculty and other public servants. It's time to make them available to all faculty.

I strongly urge your support for Senate Bill 196.

Sincerely,

Bernadette Kapocias
President, SWOCCFT