

Sylvia Gray  
3026 SE Berkeley Place  
Portland, OR 97202  
503-659-9956  
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I am writing in support of SB 196, Part Time Faculty Health Insurance Coverage. Thank you to those who have put this common-sense and very-much-needed bill forward!

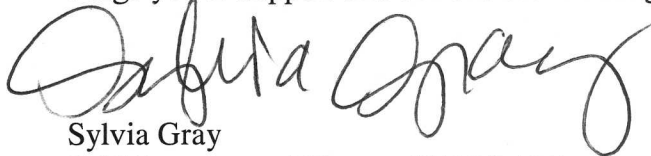
At Portland Community College (PCC) where I have worked as a faculty member for nearly 25 years, approximately two-thirds of our classes are taught by part-time faculty. Like so many other colleges across the country that have been underfunded in general, colleges seek to save money by hiring part-time faculty at a fraction of what full-time faculty are paid. For many years there was no way for part-time faculty to buy insurance except individually. The PCC Faculty Federation consistently worked on this issue, and now those who have taught enough can access insurance. But those who are not assigned enough courses at PCC are out of luck.

I was a part-time faculty member for many years, during which time I first relied on my husband's insurance, and then when suddenly on my own, I was constrained to find and buy insurance on an individual policy. When I received a series of temporary full-time appointments, my life suddenly changed for the better, as I now qualified for health insurance. **This made all the difference in the world.** At the time, though my employment was still contingent and remained precarious, the health insurance was taken care of and I could focus on my courses and students and not be worrying about survival issues on the first level of Maslow's hierarchy. Currently as a permanent full-time faculty member, I never forget the insecurity and the many challenges of part-time faculty life.

This proposed law is common-sense and provides basic human care and dignity for these part-time faculty who are equally qualified and extremely dedicated to teaching students - and yet have often not been able to access this basic necessity. One might argue that these part-time faculty members are actually *more* dedicated than others to educating students and helping them on their road to success - because they are doing it at such personal cost to themselves.

As long as the higher education system chooses to rely on contingent faculty to teach the bulk of their students, adjustments should be made to support these dedicated faculty in such a basic matter. This legislation seeks to remedy a gap through which many part-time faculty fall. It is absolutely needed.

I urge you to support this bill and see it through to enactment. Thank you.



Sylvia Gray  
PCC Instructor of History (SY SS 201)  
Educational Advisory Council (EAC) Chair [shared governance at PCC]  
Work: 971-722-4073