

Senate Bill 206 Testimony
Traci Hodgson, History Instructor
Chemeketa Community College
Oregon Education Association Board Member

Chair Roblan and Members of the Committee,

My name is Traci Hodgson and I am a History Instructor at Chemeketa Community College and a board member of the Oregon Education Association. I am here to testify in support of Senate Bill 206.

This bill is simple. It simply allows community college faculty to have the same professional freedom long afforded to university faculty for the benefit of students. Presently, university professors are allowed – and indeed expected -- to write books, articles and book reviews and speak as experts at professional conferences. They earn royalties, stipends and honoraria while engaging in these activities, exempted from the restrictions of state ethics law.

This bill would allow community college faculty to have that same professional freedom. At the community college, our focus is primarily on teaching students. As such, we become experts on how best to reach a wide range of students – from the young to the old, from the privileged to the poor, and from the traditional to the traditionally under-represented. Textbook publishers frequently want to tap our expertise as they seek to meet the changing needs of today's students, paying modest sums for this feedback. Faculty who have mastered the use of technology to enhance the student learning experience are offered honoraria to present to other instructors at conferences. And more of us are seeking to publish textbooks, often self-publishing or using college in-house publishing capabilities to do so. Many of these publishing efforts are focused on the goal of lowering student textbook costs. For most of

these efforts, community college faculty can reasonably expect to earn a few hundred dollars in compensation per year – far less than university professors might expect from similar efforts.

Yet in the current legal landscape, most of these professional activities of community college faculty are not allowed by state ethics laws. Like all public employees, we are limited to making \$50 a year from an activity that is linked to our position as college instructors. If we assign a textbook to our class that we authored, and for which we will receive royalties, we are in violation of state ethics laws. If we offer our expert feedback to publishers, in the interest of encouraging learning materials that better meet our students' needs, we are in violation of state ethics laws. Ethics constraints force us to engage in professional activities for almost no compensation, while university professors receive fair compensation for the same services without constraint.

This bill would bring equity to the educational landscape of Oregon, allowing community college faculty the same freedom to receive royalties, stipends and honoraria as university faculty. Community college students will benefit from greater access to inexpensive textbooks that are focused on their educational needs. It's simply the fair thing to do.

Thank you for your consideration of this legislation. I'd be happy to answer questions if you have any.