

April 12th, 2017

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

My name is Christine Olsen. I have been on the faculty at Oregon State for almost 9 years, working in the College of Forestry.

My positions have always been term to term, or temporary. I currently hold two positions at Oregon State. I am a non-tenure track Instructor, and I am a Research Associate. Together, my two positions often add up to full-time, though not always. My job changes every three months – sometimes I am primarily an instructor, and at other times I am working primarily as a researcher. Thus there is a lot of variability and uncertainty in my positions. I believe union representation would be especially valuable for someone like me; however, current law makes it unclear if I would remain consistently eligible for union membership. This is why I am writing in support of House Bill 3170.

In my Research Associate position, I look at the human dimensions of wild fires and prescribed burns in the context of a changing climate. To accomplish my research, I have supervised faculty research assistants for varying lengths of time, often for periods shorter than 6 months. At other times, I am not supervising anyone. As I work to further build my research output, I am working to secure grants that would provide for a faculty research assistant or post doc for a period that could range from 6 to 12 months. This occasional, temporary supervision would mean that under current law, it is possible that I would bounce in and out of eligibility for union membership. This might even happen on a month-to-month basis while I am still also working at OSU as a non-tenure track instructor.

As someone who would significantly benefit from union representation, the fact that I can be denied my collective bargaining rights is frustrating, and leaves me in an insecure position at OSU. House Bill 3170 would provide collective bargaining rights and protections to many vulnerable faculty in positions like mine.

Sincerely,

Christine Olsen