

April 14, 2017

Chair Greenlick and Members of the House Committee on Health Care,

My name is Jaime Rodriguez and I work as a career specialist at Portland Community College. I am writing to strongly oppose House Bill 3428, which would be harmful to community college employees and faculty.

I love my job and I chose to work at a place like PCC because I wanted to serve students and my community. I did not choose this profession to get wealthy. For years, my colleagues and I in Oregon's education system have taken concessions and sacrifices in salary and other benefits in exchange for having access to stable, quality health care. However, many of my colleagues who are part-time faculty at community colleges and universities at multiple institutions in Oregon, do not currently have access to *any* employer-provided affordable health insurance. They continue to fight each session just to have basic access. They also struggle to make ends meet by working at multiple institutions and sometimes second or third jobs.

Passing this bill would further weaken health care options for educators. I believe that any alleged cost savings that may result from this legislation would be offset by costs related to the extreme difficulty in recruiting quality educators and staff.

Oregon's community college system is vital to Oregon's economy and we are on the front lines of training workers for cutting edge industries. A strong community college system leads to a strong economy.

We have to decide what kind of higher education system we truly want. Do we want a system that strives for excellence, quality outcomes for students, and the attraction and retention of the world's best minds? Or do we want a race to the bottom that will almost certainly lead to the loss of talented educators, reduced outcomes, and a weakened economy? I believe the choice is clear. Now is the time to invest in education and educators so that we can continue to educate and train Oregon's next generation of skilled workers and continue to grow our economy. To do so, we must truly value our educators and staff.

I respectfully urge you to oppose House Bill 3428.

Sincerely,

Jaime Rodriguez
Hillsboro, Oregon