

March 11, 2019

To: Oregon Senate Committee on Education

From: John Blackwood

Re: Support for SB 852

Chair Wagner, Vice-chair Thomsen, and members of the committee

My name is John Blackwood and I am a full-time instructor at Umpqua Community College. I teach cybersecurity. In addition, I am the president of the UCC full-time faculty association. I previously was part-time faculty at various other community colleges, going back to 1985, before I began teaching full-time in 2004.

I am lucky to also work with excellent part-time faculty, who teach the majority of classes at UCC, if not at every community college in the state. A number of part-time faculty I work with struggle financially and lack health insurance because of its cost.

Part-time faculty at the UCC have graduate degrees and/or bring real-world experience into our classrooms. For most, teaching is a passion, which motivates them to teach a number of courses each quarter, and yet still cannot afford health care.

SB 852 would help solve this problem by enabling part-time faculty who qualify for PERS to have a large portion of their health insurance paid. Therefore, part-time faculty who teach a few courses each year would likely not qualify for this needed benefit.

Please support this bill. Its passage will materially improve the lives of educators who invest in Oregon's future but need help to ensure that they can focus on their work.