

March 9, 2019

Chair Sen Wagner, Vice Chair Sen Thomsen and Senate Education Committee members:

My name is Rob Fullmer, and I am a higher education worker at PSU, an SEIU member, and former commissioner, for three years, on Oregon's Higher Education Commission. I am submitting written testimony in favor of **SB 852 for the hearing in Senate Education on Monday, March 11th.**

SEIU represents about 4500 workers on the seven University campuses – many of them low wage employees. Our classified members on University campuses maintain grounds and campus spaces; support libraries; IT; health services; nutrition and academic programs in most of the non-teaching and non-management positions on campus. At the same time, we see Higher Education issues from a second vantage point – over half of our 65,000 statewide members are low wage earners; most without health care and retirement benefits. They and their families know that post-secondary training and education is the way out of poverty for their families; neighbors; clients and loved ones. We stand with all workers who deserve stability in workplace healthcare – especially in these times when benefits are under pressure.

Community colleges and universities have been reducing full-time faculty positions and increasing their reliance on part-time faculty for many years now. Fewer than 30 percent of the instructional workforce in colleges and universities hold full-time tenured or tenure-track jobs, down from over 70% fifty years ago. Because of this shift, Oregon's higher education system is increasingly reliant on part-time workers who deserve the peace of mind of affordable workplace healthcare.

As someone who has worked in higher education his entire career, the last 15 at Portland State University, I am writing in strong support of **SB 852** – it is long overdue to grant part-time faculty employees who work across multiple higher education institutions access to workplace healthcare benefits. Allowing the aggregation of total hours and providing this needed assistance to faculty who are doing much of the teaching on state university and community college campuses is good public policy and critically, it is fair to these workers who are treated as an underclass in the higher education system.

I take great pride in working alongside students and faculty to improve our systems of state Higher Education. SEIU has a strong interest in finding a revenue solution to the state's systemic funding problems – to fund legislation such as **SB 852** as well as many others. Thank you for consideration of this measure.

Rob Fullmer, Portland State University
SEIU 503, Member