

February 5, 2020

Chair Margaret Doherty
Members of the House Committee on Education
Oregon State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301

Re: House Bill 4146—Support

Dear Chair Doherty, Vice Chairs Alonso Leon and Helt, and members of the Committee:

I have been a full-time instructor since 2016 at Oregon State University, where I work for the School of Writing, Literature and Film teaching various writing and literature courses.

In the summer of 2014, after working for three years as a full-time assistant professor at Virginia Commonwealth University, my spouse and I decided to move back to Oregon upon her receiving a job that would significantly advance her career.

As a Ph.D., I took the gamble of leaving my job, knowing that I could likely get part-time work upon moving back to Oregon, with the hopes of turning that part-time work into a full-time position.

That plan has come to fruition, however, for two years I worked simultaneously for three different state and county funded higher education institutions: Oregon Institute of Technology—Wilsonville, Chemeketa Community College, and Oregon State University. During a few terms, I taught classes on different campuses, commuting between jobs, sometimes traveling from Wilsonville to Corvallis in the middle of my workday.

Because I taught part-time at each of these institutions, I was unable to receive healthcare benefits for me or my family. My spouse works at a non-profit, and their selection of plans was minimal and high-cost. For this period, my family used plans under the Affordable Care Act, but we made just enough money to where none of the cost was subsidized. This meant that we paid approximately \$700/month in healthcare insurance, up front and not including other costs like copays.

In sum, for around two years I was working full-time hours for state-funded institutions while remaining ineligible for healthcare for me or my three children. It was not until I began teaching two courses (and then eventually four, like I am now) at OSU that I became eligible for health benefits.

While I am fortunate to be employed full-time at Oregon State currently, there are so many instructors across the state working part-time for universities and community colleges, and for whom healthcare is not available. I cannot emphasize enough how much of a burden this is on instructors. It diminishes our quality of life, it adds stress to our jobs, and ultimately it diminishes the quality of instruction we can offer Oregon students.

Basically, if you're working full-time hours for state institutions, it should not matter if that work is split between different campuses.

Thank you for reading my testimony.

Sam Schwartz, Ph.D.
Oregon State University