

Chair Doherty and members of the House Committee for Education

My name is Kaitlin Hakanson. I teach at Klamath Community College and it's a very good fit for me — I really enjoy my students. I personally had an amazing experience attending community college in Southern California, and appreciated that I was able to pay out of pocket for my schooling. After earning my Master's degree, I knew I wanted to go back to the community college level as an instructor.

I am currently adjunct faculty, which means sometimes I teach three or four classes a term, and other times, only have one class. The majority of time, I don't find out if I'm teaching a class at all until the schedule of classes comes out and I find it in my faculty mailbox. It's all over the map and that instability impacts our household tremendously. I'm currently the sole income earner for my family, and most time, I never really know how many classes I'm going to be teaching. Finding out two weeks before the term starts that I only have one class does not give me much time to find other employment opportunities to cover our expenses. This is especially true in the Klamath area, where it is exceptionally difficult to find long-term employment, even though I have a Master's degree. It's really challenging.

This instability also impacts my ability to retain adequate healthcare coverage. Because part-time community college faculty don't have health insurance, I've enrolled in an Affordable Healthcare Act health plan. The ACA asks for income verification, and because I don't often know what my income will be from one term to the next, it makes the enrollment process complicated and frustrating. My husband and I have experienced long gaps in healthcare coverage when income changes happen outside of the enrollment period.

Adjunct faculty cover a lot of classes — and in some cases teach more than full-time faculty. If we want to see students be successful, it's important to support adjunct faculty — and part of this is by offering healthcare coverage, helping us feel more equal to our fulltime colleagues. Adjunct faculty are a big part of helping ensure students have the classes they need to graduate in a reasonable amount of time. On average, it takes students 3.5 years to get an Associate's degree, and I just don't think that's ok.

When we support students on their path to graduation by regularly offering the classes they need, they'll be more successful in entering the workforce, and the college will be more successful as a whole. We can't support our students if we can't support ourselves.

Please vote "yes" on House Bill 4146