



Chair Alonso Leon, Vice-Chairs Neron & Weber:

For the record, I am Jaime Rodriguez and I have the honor of serving as President of AFT-Oregon.

On behalf of the over 16,000 workers that AFT-Oregon represents in our state's universities, community colleges, and K-12 schools, I thank you for the opportunity to share AFT-Oregon's strong support for HB 3255 and the -1 amendment.

As you are all aware, student loan debt is a major problem for so many Oregonians and that problem is felt by many AFT-Oregon members across our state. HB 3255 is a simple bill aimed at increasing participation in the Federal Student Loan Forgiveness Program by ensuring that workers in Oregon's education system are provided with information about their eligibility to participate in the program.

HB 3255, and the -1 amendment, will also help remove barriers that adjunct faculty teaching at Oregon's universities and community colleges face when trying to access the federal loan forgiveness program. Currently, in order to be considered "full-time" (and eligible for the FSLP) an employee must work 30 hours -- for many adjunct faculty their contracts only include the hours they teach in the classroom. **In many cases, the hours spent meeting directly with students or preparing materials for class do not count towards their eligibility for the FSLP.**

The -1 amendment would direct employers to credit instructors 3.35 hours for every 1 hour spent instructing in the classroom for the purposes of qualifying for the federal loan forgiveness program. This very simple fix would make it easier for adjunct faculty to be able to qualify for the federal student loan forgiveness program **at no cost to the state or institutions.**

As I have shared with this committee in the past, adjunct instructors in Oregon continue to be paid inequitably as compared to their full-time colleagues, and far too many adjunct faculty continue to lack access to affordable healthcare. Challenges accessing this student loan forgiveness program is just one more barrier put on our adjunct faculty -- HB 3255 as amended can help remove this barrier and I urge your aye vote.