

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this bill, which I believe makes important strides toward helping hundreds of faculty at Oregon higher education institutions move off of the Oregon Health Plan and public support and into a structure intended to fund the benefits of Oregon educators. I was lucky that my part-time adjunct faculty job was in my mid-20s and I had no major health conditions at the time because there simply was no realistic means by which I could afford health insurance or the cost of a hospitalization. The faculty members I know who will benefit from this bill are hardworking professionals who have devoted themselves to student learning as their primary profession, yet are unable (due to the dearth of tenure-track positions and/or the nature of their specific expertise) to find permanent full time employment at any single institution. I do not need to tell the members of this committee that inability to pay a medical expense is second only to job loss as a driver of homelessness. As wages for part-time and non-tenure track faculty at Oregon public institutions continue to stagnate and fall well below the cost of living, I have watched homeowners become renters and ponder the possibility of having roommates again, in order to control housing costs. These are working professionals with advanced degrees whose families deserve the security that affordable healthcare provides, so that they can tackle the other challenges related to their wages and food/housing security. And they are so many of the talented educators helping the next generation of college students realize economic opportunities and assurances that our state is yet to provide their teachers.

Thank you for doing the work necessary to help all of Oregon's higher education professionals have access to affordable health care for themselves and their family members. SB 3007 is an important step in the right direction.

Sincerely,  
Dr. Emily Plec  
VP for Political Action  
Western Oregon University Federation of Teachers  
ejplec1@gmail.com