



Emily Wanous

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Dear Chair Dembrow, Vice-Chair Thomsen, and members of the Senate Education Committee,

For the record, my name is Emily Wanous and I am the Legislative Director for the Oregon Student Association. I am here today to ask for your yes vote on **SB 551**, which would ensure part-time faculty members at public institutions of higher education who qualify for health care benefits will pay 10 percent of insurance premiums for employee coverage.

Student success is a multifaceted journey that begins in the classroom. The ability for faculty to connect with and cultivate impactful relationships with their students largely depends on whether or not a professor's basic needs are met. This session, I am sure you have heard from our students of the importance of having their basic needs insecurities met and responded to accordingly. Students support **SB 551** because they recognize basic need deficits are not singular to the student experience and expands to their professors. Access to healthcare is not a luxury--it's a necessity. The pandemic has only heightened this problem.

When faculty have access to quality healthcare, they are more likely to provide the level of assistance, mentorship and leadership that teaching a college course demands. In addition, when professors have their basic needs met, they are more likely to stay in the field. This allows for continuity for students to build connections with faculty over their years in school. By increasing educators' access to healthcare, we increase the likelihood of them staying in their current position, which in turn positively impacts students' classroom experience.

Educators are the backbone of our institutions. Supporting faculty reverberates across campus. Thank you for your time and **I urge your yes vote on SB 551.**