

Date: March 11th, 2019

To: Oregon Senate Committee on Education

From: Kathleen Holloway

Re: Support for SB 852

Esteemed Chair Wagner, Vice Chair Thomsen and Members of the Committee:

My name is Kathleen Holloway and I am a part-time faculty member at Clackamas Community College. I urge you to support SB 852 because working conditions for part-time faculty are unfair and not conducive to strong educational programs. The difficulty of many part-timers to qualify for health insurance and other benefits is a travesty that the state needs to correct.

Here is my personal story about my struggle to get the health care that I need. I worked at Portland Community College for 17 years as a coordinator of a tutoring program. For seven of those years I also worked as a part-time faculty member. My family and I were covered as a benefit through my coordinator position.

In 2016, the college decided to defund my program and I was laid off at age 60. COBRA provided health insurance until age 62 but then I had no choice but to look for coverage through the federal exchange. I discovered that ACA plans for people in my age bracket are exorbitantly priced and provide poor coverage. In fact, the available plans turned out to be deceptive in ways that I couldn't have known while I was researching my options. There is lots of hidden, fine print about exceptions to what they will cover – phone consults with my doctor are not covered so when I was not able to get an appointment in person and resorted to a phone consult, I then had another out-of-pocket expense. No imaging or labs are covered until I pay off the deductible so the MRI that I now need is financially out of reach. I currently spend approximately 60% of my income on health expenses. I have never wished to be 65 and eligible for Medicare as much as now.

I was placed at step 1 on the pay scale when I was hired at Clackamas C. C. as part-time faculty despite the fact that I have 35 years of experience in my field. The college policy is to place all new hires at step 1, no exceptions. I have also not been able to get enough teaching hours to qualify for health insurance due to my low seniority. Now that I have seen both sides, employer sponsored plans vs. the public exchange, I am painfully aware that there is a huge difference between them in cost and quality.

Part-time faculty members are dedicated professionals with advanced degrees who often constitute the largest block of instructors in a department yet we are not able to cover our basic needs due to low pay and a lack of health insurance and other benefits. The passage of SB 852 would be a step in the right direction to begin to address this unjust situation and the urgent gap in health care that exists for many part-timers. Thank you for your efforts to assure its passage.