



Service Employees International Union, Local 503, OPEU

February 4, 2020

Chair Doherty; Vice Chairs Helt and Alonzo Leon; and House Education Committee members Bonham; Hernandez; Neron; Reardon; Sollman and Wallan:

My name is Stephanie Prentiss, and I work supporting students in the business office at the University of Oregon. I am also the Vice President of Local 085 a sub local of SEIU 503 on campus. I am submitting written testimony in favor of **HB 4146 - Part-time Adjunct Faculty Health Care** - for a hearing in House Education Committee on February 5th 2020. This is an idea that has been discussed in the legislature for many years and should now be moved into Oregon’s public policy.

SEIU represents about 4500 workers on the seven University campuses – many of them low wage employees. Our classified members on University campuses maintain grounds and campus spaces; support libraries; IT; health services; nutrition and academic programs in most of the non-teaching and non-management positions on campus. At the same time, we see Higher Education issues from a second vantage point – over half of our 72,000 statewide members are low wage earners; most without health care and retirement benefits. They and their families know that post-secondary training and education is the way out of poverty for their families; neighbors; clients and loved ones. We stand with all workers who deserve stability in workplace healthcare – especially in these times when benefits are under pressure.

Community colleges and universities have been reducing full-time faculty positions and increasing their reliance on part-time faculty for many years now. Fewer than 30 percent of the instructional workforce in colleges and universities hold full-time tenured or tenure-track jobs, down from over 70% fifty years ago. Because of this shift, Oregon’s higher education system is increasingly reliant on part-time workers who deserve the peace of mind of affordable workplace healthcare.

As someone who has worked in higher education for the last 19 years - I am writing in strong support of HB 4146 – it is long overdue to grant part-time faculty employees who work across multiple higher education institutions access to workplace healthcare benefits. Allowing the aggregation of total hours and providing this needed assistance to faculty who are doing much of the teaching on state university and community college campuses is good public policy and critically, it is fair to these workers who are treated as an underclass in the higher education system.

I take great pride in working alongside students and faculty to improve our systems of state Higher Education. Thank you for consideration of this measure.

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