

Chair Dembrow, members of the senate education committee. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Rob Fullmer; for the past 16 years I have been an IT worker and SEIU 503 represented employee at Portland State University.

From 2013 to 2016 I served as the non-faculty employee representative on the Higher Education Coordinating Commission. I'm here to offer my perspective as someone who served on the HECC in support of senate bill 712 to provide full voting rights to all members of the HECC - including those that are reserved for higher education workers and students.

In my time on the HECC, in addition to participating in full commission activities, I chaired a work group on one of the primary issues then under consideration, known as Pay It Forward. Other commissioners from community colleges and universities have served ably and with full voting rights on the student success and funding and achievement sub-committees for many years now. There is no functional difference in the kind and quality of work expected from or delivered by campus representatives versus at-large community members.

There is a narrative that such campus-based commissioners represent stakeholder groups and as such may not always put Oregon's best interests foremost in their considerations. While this is a concern, the process vetting candidates for these positions has proven to be strong and the decision on who has an opportunity to serve on the board is made by the Governor in consultation with her staff.

It is reasonable to expect them to continue to do this work well for nominees.

I remember meeting with Ben Cannon when he was then Governor Kitzhaber's education policy adviser and he specifically focused on the importance of representing the needs of Oregon as a whole over any constituency-based interests. As other campus community members have, I listened.

That's the kind of behavior we've seen from commissioners, whether they're from the business world, under-represented and under-served communities, or the campuses. All board members receive the same training and are subject to the same expectations for their service.

You may be aware most HECC votes are unanimous; the group works together as a team and strives to hear all perspectives and reach a consensus. In those rare cases where no consensus exists, having all participants who have been equally considering the issue weigh in on the vote is the right way to honor their commitment to the shared goal of all commissioners, which is achieving the best higher education outcomes Oregon can afford.