

Please support HB 3007/SB 551, Part-Time Faculty Health Care.

Our universities compete with other states and the rest of the world to attract students. There are many factors that bring students to Oregon, but it is great instructors that enable students to succeed, graduate, and go on to the careers that build Oregon's economy.

Many part-time faculty members are forced to scrape together a string of teaching positions at multiple institutions just to make ends meet. Compared to full-time tenured faculty, part-time faculty are disproportionately women and underrepresented minorities. In fact, some have labeled them the pink-collar workforce of academia.

Colleges and universities continue to move away from using full-time faculty, become more reliant on part-time faculty, and the pandemic has posed a special challenge to women remaining in the workforce, it has become increasingly difficult for experienced instructors to stay in the field. I know you believe health care for all is critical, and this would support a group of 1,700 hard-working public employees.

Too often, part-time faculty are working the equivalent of 1.5 instructional positions in order to cover the high costs of paying for housing, health care, and all of life's other necessities. When instructors are forced to spend so much time and resources straddled between institutions, students can't receive the access and support from their instructors that they need to succeed.

I'm sure you know that student and faculty outcomes are improved when part-time faculty receive the pay and benefits they deserve. Part-time faculty have the same qualifications and have the same skills as faculty members who are hired into a full-time position, but they are paid a fraction of what their full-time peers earn, and they don't receive benefits. I hope you agree that it is time that the state supported our part-time faculty with this basic need.

AAUP's Part-Time Faculty Health Care bills (HB 3007/SB 551) are a chance to accomplish two goals at once: they help to support the livelihoods and health of our part-time work force, which in turn strengthens higher education throughout the state for our students. I urge you to support that effort.