



American Association of University Professors

Academic Freedom for a Free Society

February 22, 2021

Senator Dembrow, Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Education
Oregon State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Senate Bill 551—Support

Chair Alonso Leon, Vice Chairs Neron and Weber, and members of the Committee,

On behalf of the more than 6300 members of the American Association of University Professors in Oregon, our collective bargaining chapters at the University of Oregon, Portland State University, Oregon State University, and Oregon Institute of Technology, and our faculty members across Oregon, I ask that you **please support SB 551**.

Institutions of higher education, both public universities and community colleges, have increasingly come to depend on the use of adjunct and part-time faculty as a response to Oregon's years of underfunding of the university system, yet constant need to continue serving students. Because of this practice, many part-time faculty must piece together work at multiple institutions, often traveling between two or three locations in a day in order to cobble together enough work to make a living. These faculty are just as highly trained and hard working as any other university or community college instructors, but don't have enough hours at any one institution to qualify for health care coverage, although they would qualify if their total hours happened to be at one institution. This is in contrast to faculty teaching a similar number of total hours, but at one institution. *This can lead to part-time faculty being forced to choose between purchasing health care and supporting the very basic needs of their families.* The Covid pandemic has only increased and highlighted the need for these faculty to have health care coverage.

SB 551 would help to remedy this inequitable situation by letting part-time and adjunct faculty combine their hours at various institutions for the purpose of determining whether they can qualify for health care coverage. Good policy like SB 551 is vital to helping these faculty members serve our students in the best way possible.

Please pass SB 551 to address this serious and unfair situation.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Dreiling', written over a light blue rectangular background.

Michael Dreiling
President, AAUP-Oregon