

February 22, 2021



**FROM THE OFFICE OF THE ASWOU PRESIDENT**

Werner University Center #122 | 345 Monmouth Ave. N. | Monmouth, OR 97361

Dear Chair Dembrow, Vice-Chair Thomsen, and members of the Senate Education Committee,

My name is N.J. Johnson and I am serving as the student body president of Western Oregon University for the current 2020-21 academic year. I am writing to advocate for the importance of a "Yes" vote on SB 551, which would provide that part-time faculty members at public institutions of higher education who qualify for health care benefits will pay 10 percent of insurance premiums for employee coverage.

As a fourth year student of a regional public university, I have had the privilege of having a diverse range of instructors from various fields of knowledge and experience. Many of the brightest and most dedicated professors that I have had the pleasure of taking courses with have been part-time faculty. In my capacity as ASWOU President and a student, I can speak to the value of building strong student/faculty relationships and how much it can contribute towards a student's success. Unfortunately, many part-time professors cannot make this commitment because they have to maintain other jobs to secure basic needs, such as healthcare.

A yes vote on SB 551 is not only an investment in the faculty members that it impacts but also the students of higher education in Oregon who these professors work with. Increasing access to health benefits will allow the most knowledgeable, engaging, and committed professors to avoid ever choosing between their career and their basic needs. This means that the most talented professors will be able to continue teaching Oregon students seeking to further their education.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

N.J. Johnson

**ASWOU President**

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