

Date: March 22, 2023

To: Senate Committee on Education
From: Eli Ronick, Adjunct Instructor of Spanish at Portland State University
RE: Support for SB 416 and Pay Equity

Chair Dembrow, Vice-Chair Weber, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Eli Ronick and I am writing to express **support for Senate Bill 416**, which will help bridge the widening gap between the pay for part-time and full-time faculty members in our higher education system and bring better equity, stronger retention, and increase overall outcomes for students.

I have been an adjunct at PSU for the last eight years. PSU is the largest university in the state and I've seen so many colleagues leave the job because they are paid very low wages, lower than full-time faculty on a per-course basis. This "adjunctification" of PSU and higher education in general has led to students having a revolving of door professors and instructors to teach them. The longer someone teaches a course, the better they teach and students are suffering from the low wages of their teachers. Students and teachers are aligned at PSU as they are elsewhere, though adjuncts tend to receive far, far lower pay than K-12 educators.

I spent years as the Chair of Membership at PSUFA, the union for adjuncts at PSU. In this position, I spoke with many adjuncts at PSU. It was not uncommon to find out that many were heavily reliant on government assistance to feed their families, dealing with cripple student debt of their own, or sometimes on the verge of needing to live out of their cars. This was heartbreaking to see and is unacceptable. No teacher should be paid far below a living wage, as educators at paid at PSU.

This bill adds a pay ratio between full time and part time faculty that is a first step towards improvements to our higher education system that will benefit students, faculty, and the community. It's a first step, the first of many that need to be taken to ensure teachers and, by proxy, their students at Oregon universities are treated fairly.

This is why I urge your yes vote on SB 416. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Eli Ronick