

I am unable to attend the public hearing for SB196 on March 28 because I am a part-time community college teacher who works 2 jobs to support myself. ("Spring break" is also known as "the only time I have to prep for next term.") I am hoping that my email will add to the testimony and please you are receiving to do whatever you can to ensure that SB196 passes.

Why do I teach?

- Well, maybe it's because I get paid so much? No, that's not it. I work two part-time teaching jobs and last year earned \$42,606. Why so little? No education? Well, I have 3 college degrees (BA, MA, MA). No experience? I have nearly 40 years of experience at the high school, college, and community levels. No seniority? I have been at PCC for 13 years and Mt. Hood CC for 18 years. If you can believe it, I am at the top of the pay scale for a part-time writing teacher.
- Oh, maybe I teach because I get summers off. No. Actually I teach every summer. If I didn't, that annual salary would be reduced by about 25%.
- Is it PERS that keeps me teaching? Not really. After 19 years of paying into PERS, I filed to start receiving my checks after I turned 65; I am now getting a whopping \$1,300 a month from PERS. Not exactly a pot of gold.
- Well, is it job security? No, not that. When student numbers go down or full-time hires go up, I lose classes. If I lose too many, I'm unemployed.
- So maybe it's health care? That is partly true. The health insurance I get through PCC is a huge reason why I keep on working (my 69th birthday is coming up this summer). But when my course load goes down at PCC (see above), I am in danger of losing my insurance (the fact that I also teach at MHCC does not count).

I teach because I believe that education is the #1 guarantee that our country and our world will survive and thrive. I teach because I am good at it, because I can help young people (and some older people) realize their dreams, and because I really like teaching. Oh, and I teach because I can't afford to retire.

I teach "part-time" because those are the only jobs available. By the way, "part-time" doesn't mean "semi-retired but keeping my hand in" nor does it mean "picking up a little work here and there." It is how community colleges balance their budgets: by paying part-time faculty less than full-timers, with fewer benefits and no job security, then staffing about 70% of their classrooms with "part-time" teachers.

So here is my "ask": You are currently considering a bill that would help part-time teachers get, keep and afford health insurance. Oregon needs to do this, especially given the current federal craziness around health care issues. It is the least (and I mean that literally) this state should do for the people who educate your children.

Sincerely,

Gay Monteverde, part-time faculty, Mt. Hood CC and PCC