

March 27, 2017

Chair Roblan and Members of the Senate Committee on Education:

I am writing in support of **SB196**.

I have been a part time instructor at Oregon colleges and universities since 1990. As a part-time instructor at Portland Community College, I was fortunate to gain health coverage in 2008, well over a decade after I started working for the institution. In 2013, my program was subsumed into a larger one and I lost my instructional position of 15 years. At the time, I was encouraged to get my master's degree so that I could work in the program that my prior program was absorbed by, which I did. Unfortunately, they were reluctant to hire me based on my step placement and so I now find myself working three jobs, trying to pay for ACA coverage, school loans, while also feeding my kid and keeping a roof over our heads.

Most recently, I was in the classroom 29 hours a week, with 22 of those hours at Oregon community colleges (and the remaining hours for a nonprofit). In a good term, I teach more hours than most full time instructors. One employer (Mt Hood Community College) doesn't provide health benefits for part time instructors. The other (Portland Community College) does, but my program skirts this responsibility by hiring instructors as "casual employees". This allows them to hire experienced teachers with master's degrees yet pay a low hourly wage and no benefits whatsoever, despite the fact that we have exactly the same responsibilities as our union-represented part time faculty colleagues.

Health care is an enormous worry for me. I have a chronic autoimmune condition that requires regular lab work and physician visits, but my ACA plan has such high monthly premiums along with a high deductible that it's virtually useless to me for regular health care. My work varies from term to term that most months I have to make a choice between paying my school loan or paying for insurance I can't afford to use. Passage of SB 196 would make an enormous difference in my life, allowing me to affordably get the health care I need without enormous cost to me.

I have worked hard for Oregon community colleges for over 2 decades and I feel I should merit the same same access to health care that my colleagues receive. I'd ask you to consider making this available to all community college instructional staff, regardless of how the institution chooses to classify us.

Many thanks,

Melisa Crosby
Portland, Oregon