



March 28, 2017

Senate Education Chair Roblan; Vice Chair Linthicum and Committee members.

We at SEIU Local 503 are writing in strong support of **SB 196** – a bill that would grant part-time faculty employees access to health care benefits. The bill focuses on - aggregating total hours and - providing needed help to faculty who are doing much of the teaching on many state university and community college campuses and living with minimal economic security and benefits.

As I'm sure others will attest - Colleges and universities in the U.S. have turned away from full-time faculty positions and turned towards a reliance on part-time faculty. In 1960, 75 percent of college faculty members had full-time tenured positions or were on a tenure track. Today, fewer than 30 percent of the instructional workforce in colleges and universities hold full-time tenured or tenure-track jobs. These flipped workforce numbers mean that our State Higher Ed system is increasingly relying on the shoulders of part-time workers who need to be helped - as they continue to help educate our students. The fact that many qualify for food assistance programs is a clear indication that something must be done to assist them with Health Care coverage.

As you may know SEIU represents about 4500 workers on the seven University campuses – many of them are also low wage employees. Our classified members on University campuses maintain grounds and all campus spaces; support libraries; IT; health services; nutrition and academic programs in most of the non-teaching and non-management positions on campus. But we see Higher Education issues from a second important vantage point – as over half of our 65,000 statewide members are low wage earners; most without health care and retirement benefits. They and their families know that post-secondary training and education is the way out of poverty for their families; neighbors; clients and loved ones. And we want to stand with all workers who deserve stability in health care – especially in these times when benefits are being put in jeopardy by national dialogues.

That is why we take great pride in working alongside students and faculty to improve our systems of state Higher Education. And are involved in finding a revenue solution to the state's systemic funding problems – and afford the kinds of programs described in SB 196 as well as many others. Thank you for your consideration of this measure.

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