



## **Testimony on Senate Bill 196**

Senate Education Committee

March 28, 2017

Chair Roblan and members of the Committee. My name is Kyle Thomas and I am the Director of Legislative and Policy Affairs for the Higher Education Coordinating Commission. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on Senate Bill 196.

The Commission recognizes the increasing role and appreciates the tireless work of adjunct and part-time faculty in educating Oregon college and university students, and makes no comment on the merit of the proposal before you today. This testimony is meant solely to provide comment on the technical challenges of implementing the bill as written.

The HECC currently does not have authority to enforce or affect a change in institutional policy related to the calculation of benefits. The bill only provides the HECC with the authority to review institutional policy, and providing the HECC authority to override or mandate a policy would represent a significant shift in the relationship between HECC and Oregon public institutions.

Additionally, the language of the bill would appear to require either the institutions at which an individual is employed to collaborate on determining eligibility and benefits selection, with the HECC providing dollars to the institution providing the benefit, or it would appear to require the HECC to act as the party responsible for ensuring benefits eligibility, selection, and payment. In either case, there would be significant potential cost to the agency to track employee benefits eligibility and cost, and to ensure benefit payments are made to benefit providers or institutions.

The HECC does not currently have benefits administration staff, nor does it process employee benefits for its own agency employees, as benefits are processed through PEBB and PERS and payroll is administered by the Department of Administrative Services. Due to this structure, under either scenario, the costs associated with HECC implementing the requirements of this bill are anticipated to be significant.

I appreciate your time and attention to this testimony. Please do not hesitate to contact me with further questions.