



Affiliated with the MTA and NEA

**Hearing of the Joint Committee on Public Service
Testimony in Support of H2723/S1732
October 19, 2021**

Chairs Brady and Gordon and members of the Joint Committee on Public Service, my name is CJ O'Donnell. I am the President of the Massachusetts State College Association, the union that represents more than 1,700 part-time and continuing education faculty at the nine Massachusetts state universities.

On behalf of these members, and thousands more adjunct faculty educating tens of thousands of Massachusetts students, I ask for the committee's support of House 2723/Senate 1732 "An Act to provide fair working conditions for public higher education adjunct faculty."

As you know, Section 1 of the bills would recognize faculty who teach the equivalent of at least two three-credit courses per semester or four three-or-more- credit courses per calendar year as an "employee" under the General Laws, would grant these faculty eligibility for membership in the state employees retirement system and would allow them to earn creditable service for such time.

Pension eligibility is critical for these vital employees who currently only have extremely limited retirement saving mechanisms available to them, such as OBRA. While well intended, OBRA is insufficient to ever effectively allow adjunct faculty to retire with any meaningful retirement savings.

Section 2 recognizes that many adjunct faculty teach at more than one public higher education institution, and would afford for the pooling of the stipends earned and courses taught towards eligibility. Again, this is vitally important as many adjunct faculty teach at multiple institutions simultaneously.

Section 3 would allow for retroactive creditable service, not just perspective. This is urgently needed as these faculty have effectively been exploited by the state for years, and in some cases decades.

Section 7 recognizes that adjunct faculty do not receive remunerations that is close to a proration of full-time salaries, despite efforts by various unions to try to achieve that. The MSCA has been able to

make slight gains in this area for day part-time faculty, but not for those teaching in the Divisions of Graduate and Continuing Education.

Section 8 would require the institutions to establish processes for adjunct faculty (after a probationary period) to receive timely notice and priority consideration for courses being offered. This would afford at least a minimum assurance or opportunity to plan from semester to semester. Again, efforts to achieve this have had various degrees of success at the bargaining tables.

Finally, Section 9 would require that each institution create a process for ensuring that qualified non-tenure track faculty receive full and fair consideration in attaining tenure-track positions when available. The section would also ensure that non-tenure track faculty accumulate seniority, are notified of job openings prior to being posted externally, and are afforded an interview during the search and screen process.

Although the bills do not address access to GIC coverage, pension eligibility is the first step to such recognition.

While the sad trend in higher education nationwide for decades has been to adjunctify the faculty, you have the opportunity to reduce significantly the uncertainty these valued members of the academy face, while dignifying their contributions to the citizenry of the Commonwealth.

Please support House 2723/Senate 1732.

Thank you for your time and your service to the Commonwealth.

CJ O'Donnell
MSCA President