

Thank you, Mr. Chairman for the opportunity to speak on behalf of Ivy Tech Community College of Indiana's 200,000 students and nearly 8,000 faculty and staff. And thank you for continuing the discussion on the effect that the current health care laws are having in the classroom and workplace.

Our focus at Ivy Tech, as it is for the 1,000 community colleges across the country, is to employ thousands of faculty and to educate tens of thousands of students for future careers. The community college structure, unique to the United States, is also our country's most affordable and accessible option to higher education. The United States is behind in educational attainment. If we are to close the global gap, we must do all we can to keep higher education both affordable and accessible.

Let me be specific about Indiana. We have one statewide community college. We are the largest such College in the United States serving those 200,000 students at nearly 100 locations around the state. We are an open admissions institution thus serving a complex student body, some entering college for the first time, maybe one year or even 20 years after high school. Some seeking a career change and others starting at the community college and then transferring to a four-year school. Among Indiana's public institutions, Ivy Tech has more than half of all Pell Grant recipients and more than half of African American students enrolled in higher education in the state. For many of our students, Ivy Tech may be their best chance in life to get the education needed by today's workforce. Our mission is unique to higher education and I would argue that community colleges are more critical than any other institutions in order to rebuild the middle class.

One of the keys to our success is our adjunct faculty team of more than 4,000 this very semester. Many are practitioners in their field who bring real-life, real-time experience into the classroom. It helps our students be more career-ready when they leave us. Adjunct faculty bring much needed diversity into our classrooms in a variety of ways and they expose local business and industry to the community college. Moreover, these adjuncts are often the very individuals we consider when we have full-time positions to fill, a critical resource for the college. In fact in the last four years, we have placed more than 500 adjuncts into our 1,500 full-time positions.

Now before I speak to some elements of the Affordable Care Act I want to be very clear that Ivy Tech Community College is a firm supporter of ensuring Americans have access to health care. However I would like to highlight some serious issues we face with respect to certain provisions specifically related to the new law, which is having a significant impact on institutions such as ours, as well as for many of the individuals we employ.

Part of our strategy to keep tuition affordable is to operate within a model that utilizes adjunct faculty for over 50 percent of the instruction we deliver. The Affordable Care Act has caused us to assess the hours of teaching we can offer to our adjunct faculty. Like many community colleges our funding is very limited. It does not allow us to absorb large unfunded mandates such as any employee who reaches 30 hours being offered health insurance. We would have to pass along such increases on the backs of students by increasing tuition. As a result many of those who are at the lowest income levels trying to improve their lives would no longer be able to afford College.

The alternative to big tuition increases is to find more adjunct faculty to meet the student demand. This creates another challenge, the lack of additional credentialed faculty in certain disciplines, particularly Master's degree in English and Math and credentialed faculty in Advanced Manufacturing. We are in fact canceling classes because of this. And despite having qualified adjuncts which could step in and teach another course or two, we are not in a position to allow them to do so. It results in turning away faculty from additional earnings.

Because of the unique role of the adjunct in the community college, the end result may be less access for the students and the inability of faculty to stay with one college. Some of our adjuncts have taken positions at other institutions to fill the financial gap. This takes away faculty's exposure to potential full-time opportunities in the future.

One of our adjunct faculty who has taught with us for over 20 years has had to start teaching at another college and as she stated the "chaos surrounding her status has made her incredibly nervous and uneasy."

Furthermore the 30-hour rule impacts us in two other ways. We had planned to expand the advising role for adjuncts, critical for retention. However the new law has made this difficult to implement. This creates a real challenge in moving our students to completion. Adjuncts could be a vital resource to help us in this area.

Professional development for adjuncts is on hold until we develop what will be a costly statewide system to track their hours. Providing such professional development becomes a challenge based on the new limits.

This discussion is necessary. This is about ensuring we are able to provide the best educational product we can at Ivy Tech while protecting the jobs of our adjunct faculty and their working conditions. The goal is clear and that is to increase educational attainment levels across our nation but I fear these changes will only increase the cost of higher education and decrease those attainment levels. At a minimum education possibly could be exempt from these limits as the 30-hour rule puts the burden on a segment least able to benefit from it and afford it.

Thank you for the opportunity to visit with you today.