

February 14, 2011

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To Whom It May Concern:

Today I received notice of the hearing that is to take place tomorrow regarding revision of contract legislation in the consideration of part-time faculty's eligibility for unemployment compensation. I will be on my way to Bridgeport, CT, from my home in Pawcatuck, CT, at the time of the hearing. In lieu of attendance, and in support of opening and continuing a dialogue on this topic, here is my personal experience with the matters at hand.

I have been a PTL, part-time lecturer, in the CSU and CT Community Colleges systems since the semester immediately following my completion of graduate school when I earned an MS in English with Certification to teach secondary education from SCSU. I accrued 60k in student loans during my two years in graduate school, 2006-2008. I have enjoyed the assignments I have been lucky enough to secure, and please notice that luck often had more to do with obtaining them than any of my interests, skills, or qualifications. More was about timing of inquiry and application, availability of assignments, and my ability to accept an assignment not knowing my schedule, or already having one offer for that time slot. I continue to seek a full-time assignment, but am nascent in the field of teaching in higher education, as of yet have not earned a terminal degree, and, of course, I must dedicate time to job searching and fulfilling the responsibilities of teaching. I currently have offers to teach next semester, fall 2011, but will not receive a contract until one week before the semester begins, or perhaps one week or more into the semester, as has been the case several times before. I had two courses at one school this semester, but the snowy weather wreaked havoc on the registration process, and so despite high enrollment after the storms, several courses (including one of my sections,) was canceled due to low enrollment.

Just before graduation, I also married (June 2008.) In September of that year, my husband (a graduate of WCSU, History, '96,) and I purchased our home. The 1995 Chevy Blazer I received as a gift from my brother-in-law to get through grad school finally fell apart, and the lack of any heat made it more than uncomfortable to drive, and so we had to purchase a reliable (and heated) car for me. My husband is a boat builder whose only job offer, albeit a prestigious one, was to commute daily to Boston, MA, to re-deck the USS Constitution. He did that, until a Reduction in Force in November 2010 forced his lay off.

From 2008 to today, we have done everything we can to get by. (I have learned a lot about the flexibility of pasta in creative cooking.) We live on a very trim budget, and please do not think that we are not grateful for the comforts of life, and our good health, that we do enjoy.

Last April, I started a home jewelry direct sales business. I also conduct workshops and after-school programs in theater. It is very difficult for me to find work at all since most part-time jobs require set hours that I can not commit to because I do not know what my schedule will be in a few months. For instance, I teach Monday and Wednesday mornings, and Tuesday evenings this semester. I do not have any assignments for the summer. Next semester, I will teach Monday and Friday mornings, and Tuesday and Thursday evenings, if the enrollment is high enough, and all other factors tally to, "Yes! I got a gig! I can earn approximately \$4,000.00 per

course divided into eight installments over the next sixteen weeks. And then, nothing for sure." By the way, in the preliminary preparation of filing my Federal taxes, I discovered that the jewelry business I tried last year actually cost me more to operate than I earned. I will not be doing much with that in 2011 or in future years.

Any suggestions?? PLEASE consider my circumstances, and consider what you can do to improve my chances of keeping my house, not divorcing due to financial stress (a leading cause of divorce in our country,) not falling ill due to stress, and not leaving the profession. Unemployment benefits in between actual signed contract assignments could help, yes?

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Leigh Cremin

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Leigh I. Cremin  
Lecturer, Performing Arts Department  
Eastern Connecticut State University

Office location & phone:  
Beckert Hall Room 08  
860-465-5709

Mailbox location:  
PAD Office, Shafer Hall 06