

California Teachers Association

1705 Murchison Drive
Burlingame, CA 94010
cta.org

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Contact: NewsDesk@cta.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Part-Time Instructors File Class-Action Lawsuit Over Minimum Wage Violations at Long Beach City College

*Case Has Statewide Implications; New Legislation Would
Address Pay Parity on Community College Campuses*

LOS ANGELES — In a news conference this morning, two Long Beach City College (LBCC) part-time faculty members announced they have filed a [class-action lawsuit](#) in Los Angeles Superior Court against Long Beach Community College District (LBCCD) over failure to compensate them and hundreds of other adjunct faculty at the minimum wage as required by law. Art History instructors Karen Roberts and Seija Rohkea described the many additional duties their teaching assignments require beyond the time in front of students for which they are actually paid, as well as unsuccessful attempts to get LBCC to address this issue in the past through collective bargaining efforts.

"My hope is this lawsuit will not just rectify the situation for my colleagues at Long Beach City College, but that it will raise awareness of a systemic problem that impacts thousands of part-time community college instructors throughout the state," said **Seija Rohkea**, an Art History instructor at both Long Beach City College and Cypress College. "It's long past time for adjunct faculty to be treated fairly and compensated for all the work that goes into teaching a community college class."

LBCC and other community colleges require part-time instructors to work many hours performing teaching-related work outside of the classroom, work which includes time spent planning lectures, grading, and performing other instructional activities that are necessary to teach a class. Colleges also evaluate the work performance of these instructors based on their teaching-related work outside of the classroom. However, many colleges do not pay instructors anything for those hours worked. Because these faculty members are not exempt from minimum wage laws, today's filing states they should be paid at least the minimum wage (currently \$15/hour) for each of those uncompensated hours.

"Adjunct instructors at community colleges have the same qualifications as their full-time colleagues and need to be paid accordingly. They should not be expected to perform the same

required work for free,” said **Karen Roberts**, who has taught Art History at Long Beach City College for more than 20 years. “This lawsuit will force the college to comply with the law and hold them accountable to creating an equitable working environment.”

CTA President **E. Toby Boyd** said that what is happening at Long Beach City College is not unique.

“Most part-time faculty have to work multiple jobs just to make ends meet. Those who find part-time employment on multiple campuses often endure brutal commutes, which of course, they aren’t compensated for either. The lawsuit being filed today is also emblematic of the widespread issue of the lack of parity between part-time and full-time faculty on community college campuses.”

Their suit is seeking backpay plus interest, missing retirement system contributions for unpaid wages, a court declaration and injunction requiring LBCC to pay its part-time faculty for all hours worked, and any other penalties available under law. Long Beach City College employs approximately 650 part-time instructors each semester.

While the suit filed today is specific to Long Beach City College, the lack of pay parity on California’s Community College System is a widespread, systemic issue. CTA and its affiliates are investigating potential minimum wage violations in a number of college districts.

CTA is also [co-sponsoring new legislation, AB 1752 \(Santiago\)](#), which would address pay parity on California community college campuses and require the colleges to pay their part-time faculty in a proportional manner equal to the way they compensate their full-time instructors.

“It is way past time that the California Community College (CCC) system fairly compensate their part-time faculty, who are the backbone of the CCC system,” said **Assembly Member Miguel Santiago (D-Los Angeles)**. “For decades, part-time faculty have been overworked and underpaid while making up 40% of CCC faculty and teaching 50% of classes. With AB 1752, part-time faculty will finally reach pay parity by requiring community college districts to compensate part-time faculty at least the same ratio to the full-time faculty for comparable duties.”

Community College Association (CCA) leaders have been meeting with lawmakers urging their support when AB 1752 goes before the Assembly Higher Education Committee Tuesday.

“We’re grateful for Assembly member Santiago and our partners supporting AB 1752. We’re looking forward to the committee meeting tomorrow and beyond until we can get right this wrong,” said **Eric Kaljumägi**, CCA President. “We urge members of that committee to support AB 1752 and we thank the hundreds who have sent emails and called committee members and their own lawmakers urging support for this important legislation.

California Federation of Teacher President **Jeff Freitas** is concerned for the impact of this exploitation on part-time faculty and their loved ones.

“Every day part-time faculty in our community colleges go above and beyond for California students. But part-time faculty are exploited across the state, hurting not only their ability to provide for themselves and their families, but their ability to be there for their students and communities as well. AB 1752 is critical to ensure that these valuable educators receive the pay

and respect they deserve to do their important work.”

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The 310,000-member California Teachers Association is affiliated with the 3 million-member National Education Association.