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secretary of the OCCA, as the committee heard final testimony on the bill Thursday.

Last October, in response to the OCCA's concerns, Duncan appointed an executive director for community college services and restructured the State Board of Education to give community colleges more voice.

The newly appointed executive director for community college services, Mike Holland, introduced a compromise bill that would require the State Board of Education to consider community college issues at least six times a year.

The compromise bill, House Bill 2027, retained the executive director as an advocate specifically for community colleges to be sure they weren't lost in the State Board of Educa-

tion's other business.

The Legislature should not be defining the agenda of the State Board of Education as required by the compromise bill, said Rep. Carl Hosticka, D-Eugene. But the bill supported by the OCCA is "not a bad idea" because it keeps with the principles of democracy by allowing the governed to choose the governing body.

The Executive Department opposes the creation of a separate agency for community colleges because such an agency could eventually lead to the state assuming control of community colleges.

"If House Bill 2530 is passed, over time you will convert the locally owned community colleges to state institutions," Holland said. "My concern is

that the state did not create those institutions, the local people created them and it's unfair to just take over."

Rep. Ted Calouri, R-Beaverton, said he would not support either of the bills because he does not believe that community colleges need a law to help them gain more recognition from the state.

But Rep. Margaret Carter, D-Portland, said Oregon's community colleges have problems. She pointed to the "really big mess" facing community college students who want to transfer to state higher education schools. "For us to continue to allow the Department of Education to continue to neglect community colleges...is a failure in our duties."

Benefits

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The coalition hopes to change the compensation system in four key ways:

- Removing the disincentive for people to return to work — this would mean changing the formula for calculating wage payments to injured workers, currently at 66 percent of gross wages, to 80 percent of spendable wages, saving employers millions of dollars. This will effectively eliminate workers being paid more while staying home than at work.

- Ending double-dipping — the bill proposes to eliminate the practice of double-dipping by coordinating disability benefits from job-related injuries with any benefits received from Social Security.

- Cutting bureaucratic overhead — the bill would allow insurance carriers to evaluate the claims from injured workers and make settlement without submitting paperwork to the Evaluations Division of the Department of Workers Compensation, where claims are re-evaluated. This will save time and expense.


- Closing loopholes — the coalition hopes to define what compensable injuries are in clear language. This will allow companies and their carriers to pay only legitimate claims and avoid fraud.

In addition to these changes, the coalition hopes to encourage safety in the workplace, reduce the cost of workers' compensation, eliminate abuses and assure adequate compensation for injured workers.

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