

# Oregon Student Association Mid-Session Legislative Report 2017





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## Introduction

It has been a tremendously busy time at the capitol for students this session. After students registered and educated nearly 50,000 of their peers this past fall, we came out in full force for the 2017 long legislative session. Students have been able to:

- Submit over **70** written and oral testimonies.
- Have over **100** student leaders from around the state join our OSA lobby day and Rally in February.
- Have about **15** students attending local legislative town halls.
- Have over **50** students attend the O-Board Lobby in April.

It's clear that students have been visible, engaged, and working hard this session. It is because of this hard work that **all 6 of our Priority Issues** have made it past the first chamber deadlines! Although this is great news, we still have much more work to do to ensure that all of our priority issues make it past the second chamber deadlines and for higher education budgets to be in a good place.

## Budget Priorities

### Origin of issue:

- Came out of the "College Affordability" issue Brief - From Jori Messner (Central Oregon Community College), Connor Westover (Central Oregon Community College), Rachel Grisham (Oregon State University)
- College Affordability ranked highest on the Statewide Student Survey

### Background and Problem:

Being a college student in today's economy is much more expensive than any other time in American history. Tuition has skyrocketed and financial aid (not loans) has not kept up with this increase leaving low-income students shut out of not only a degree, but also a debt free post-college future. It's clear tuition is too damn high. For decades, college tuition has steadily increased across the state of Oregon. In 1980, the average cost of in-state tuition at Oregon universities was \$931.50. Today, that figure has risen to \$8,380. We also know that tuition aside, being a college student is incredibly expensive. The costs of food, housing, and transportation have risen much higher than CPI over the last decade, forcing many students to choose between food and school, housing or textbooks. As college becomes less affordable, enrollment will inevitably be negatively impacted, which will in turn further impact the cost of tuition. Unless this cycle is broken, more and more Oregonians, especially those who are low income, will face



the threat of being unable to afford a college education. This threatens to erode one of the cornerstones of our democracy.

Solution:

We need the state to fund higher education budgets at a level that will not increase tuition above 5%. We also need the state to further expand the Oregon Opportunity Grant, Oregon's only need based aid for low income students.

Where we stand with our budgets:

- Our Ask: \$765 Million for Universities (keeps tuition below 5%)
  - This is the same budget ask that Universities are using
  - Governor has requested \$667M in her recommended budget
  - Co-Chair framework funds Universities at about \$683M
- Our Ask: \$636 Million for Community Colleges (keeps tuition below 5%)
  - \$2M more than Community colleges ( additional dollars should go towards covering the cost of implementing Open Educational Resource and Universal Transfer bills.)
  - Governor has requested \$550M in her recommended Budget
  - Co-Chair framework funds Community Colleges at about \$556.3M
- Our Ask: \$155 Million for the Oregon Opportunity Grant (6600 additional grants)
  - No one else has a budget ask for the OOG
  - Governor requested \$151M - additional 5000 awards
  - Co-Chair framework funds the OOG at \$140M - No change
- Oregon Promise
  - It would cost \$40M-\$50M to fully fund the Oregon Promise
  - OSA doesn't currently have an official position.
  - The Governor Requested \$40M
  - Co-Chairs fund the Oregon Promise at \$5M

Ways and Means Road Show:

Students from the Oregon Student Association were able to:

- Attended 5 Roadshows
- 14 total verbal testimonies
- Participate in 2 press conferences
- 31 written testimonies submitted

This was our first major statewide push as an organization to share our stories with legislators. Students talked about how we needed more revenue to fund higher education budgets and how



the proposed cuts by institutions would further send students drowning in debt. Our messaging was effective and it was clear we had a strong statewide presence.

### Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education

The Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education had a hearings on:

- April 4th (Public Hearing for Financial Aid)
- April 10th (Public Hearing for Community Colleges)
- April 17th (Public Hearing for Universities)

These hearings were essential for students to share their stories and let legislators know how much we need a workable higher education budget. At these hearings we had about 17 students testify and a few others submit written testimony.

### Cost-Containment Budget Principles:

Senate President Courtney and the Speaker Kotek sent out a cost containment document as a way to start the conversation around balancing the budget. The cost containment principles include:

- Do not create programs and start them at the end of the biennium.
- Do not create new programs or funds that have no money to support them.
- Use one-time funds for one-time investments or save them for an emergency.
- Do not automatically replace lost federal or other funding.
- Require analysis of ongoing costs rather than initial costs for all new programs.
- Review performance and need for current programs and services to determine whether new proposals are a higher priority than current programs and services.
- Transition the timing of issuing bonds to reduce future rollup costs.
- Prioritize preservation and maintenance of infrastructure before constructing new buildings.
- Limit creating new task forces, boards and commissions.

This document will has and will continued to be referenced throughout session, and will also be a part of revenue conversations going forward.

### Higher Education Coordinating Commission tuition setting meeting:

As Universities begin to set their tuition increases, the HECC has planned on hearing all of the universities tuition increases on May 11th. This is an opportunity for students to testify about our budget asks and tuition affordability. Please note that this tuition setting meeting is only for universities that are planning to raise their tuition above 5%.



### Newly formed Joint Revenue Committee:

Starting this week, legislators will start to iron out a possible revenue proposal for the state. What we know so far is that it looks like it may be a business activity fee with will be applied to a broad range of businesses, while also providing tax cuts to Oregon families. More will be released at 8:30 am May 2nd. (Stay tuned)

## Priority Issues

### ***Cultural Competency HB 2864***

#### Origin of issue brief:

- Came out of the “Cultural Competency Policy implementation” issue brief -
  - From Mariana Sofia Paredones (LCC), Jamani Crockett (SOU), Ahsantee Foree (SOU), Seth Joyce (LCC), Juan Navarro (WOU), Addie (EOU) and Gabe Tzao (EOU), Gabe Gardiner (UO), Jaime Hernandez (WOU), Samantha Ing (PSU), Devon Backstrom (PSU)
- Was not selected to be on the statewide student survey

#### Background and Problem:

The idea of House Bill 3308 first began with students from marginalized communities noticing a trend in their experiences at their respective institutions. These experiences included a host of micro-aggressions in the classroom, a lack of institutional resources, and a lack of understanding from their peers. Students shared these common stories with each other and discovered that as their campuses became more diverse than ever, Oregon would need to seriously consider how to address the disparities in higher education that they faced. This led students to write policy briefs on how to address these issues on the statewide level. These policy briefs were created under a principal belief that education is for the public good and that the role of higher education institutions is to foster equality while dismantling intolerance.

As policy options were being developed, it became clear students needed a multifaceted solution to address the culture shock they face when arriving on campus and the persistent underrepresented student achievement gap. In an effort to tackle this complex issue, students decided the most strategic way to address the need for Cultural Competency was to create a workgroup to further study existing best practices, what the “standard” of trainings would be, and what the implication of implementing the standards and training would be. With this research, stakeholders would then look to the legislature to implement the workgroup recommendations and further higher education equality in a tangible way. While testifying on this bill, student veterans, student parents, first generation students, and students from minority backgrounds spoke about the disparities they faced. These testimonies were a representation of



how different communities have encountered institutional barriers while going through their college career. Students talked about how they didn't feel safe on campus and the lack of resources to address their needs.

### Solution:

The workgroup identified several key recommendations, including the following:

- Adopt Cultural Fluency and Competency Standards for all employees of Oregon's public colleges and universities as presented in this report.
- Require each college and university to provide on-going training and development opportunities that foster the cultural fluency and competency of campus staff, faculty, and administration.
- Create a mechanism for assessing the cultural fluency and competency of all employees.
- Add cultural fluency and competency measures in staff, faculty and administration performance appraisals and self-evaluations.
- Include an assessment of the cultural fluency and competence of all applicants during the hiring process.
- Create mechanisms for assessing the level of safety, respect, and inclusion in all classroom learning environments;
- Provide rewards and other incentives for employees who advance their campus' efforts in diversity, inclusion, and equity efforts.

### Summary of the Bill:

Requires each community college and public university to establish process for recommending, and providing oversight for implementation of, cultural competency standards for institution and institution's employees. The bill also requires each institution to make cultural competency trainings available to all employees and produce biennial reports.

### History of the bill:

HB 2864 started in House Higher Education where it went through several amendments. These amendments came from negotiations with universities, community colleges, unions and legislative members. HB 2864 had its first hearing in March where students from around the state was able to explain the importance of creating cultural competency standards on their campuses. In the second hearing Rep. Alonso Leon was able to take questions from the committee about the final amendments that were drafted. Cultural Competency was later voted out of House Higher Education unanimously and sent to the floor where legislators debated for 2 hours the merits of the bill. After a lengthy floor session, HB 2864 passed 45-15 with bipartisan support.



Where this bill is at now:

HB 2864 has been sent to the Senate President's Office for Senate committee referral.

Where will the bill go next:

Cultural Competency will be head to Senate Education committee where it will await a hearing.

***End Profiling HB 2355***

Origin of issue brief:

- In 2015 HB 2002 “End Profiling” became law, which defined Profiling and created the End Profiling task force under the Attorney General’s office.
- Students supported extending the End Profiling task for in 2016 (Level 2)
- There were a “Public Safety Reform Issue Brief”
  - By Jaime Hernandez Western Oregon University
- This is a Coalition issue led by Unite Oregon, ACLU and the Fair Shot Coalition

Background and Problem:

Every day, people are targeted based on their race, ethnicity, religion, national origin, language, housing status, sexual orientation or gender identity. While Oregon legislators voted to ban police profiling in 2015, there is still no structure in place to effectively identify, record and correct profiling practices by Oregon law enforcement agencies. To further address this urgent issue, the Attorney General, the End Profiling coalition, and stakeholders in the Law Enforcement Profiling Taskforce worked hard to propose the following strategies.

Solution:

Oregon needs a way to collect data to track if profiling is happening in different parts of the state. Our officers also need to be properly trained in implicit bias.

Summary of the Bill:

- Data collection for all officer-initiated pedestrian and traffic stops.
- Annual reporting and review of stop data by the Oregon Criminal Justice Commission with reports to the Governor and Oregon Department of Justice.
- Technical guidance by Department of Public Safety Standards and Training (DPSST) for departments that need to correct patterns and practices of profiling.
- Transparency and accountability for the public when an agency receives guidance from DPSST.



- Regular training to prevent profiling for all levels of law enforcement, including management.
- Reduction of charges for certain drug possession from felonies to misdemeanors.

#### History of the bill:

HB 2355 started in House Judiciary. Before the first hearing, stakeholders of the Attorney General's Profiling Taskforce continued to work through the final language of the bill. Most of the disagreement came from the portion of the bill that defelonize drug possession. The first hearing happened at the beginning of March. Unite Oregon, ACLU, Urban League of Portland, NAACP Oregon and the Oregon Student Association all testified as proponents of the End Profiling bill. In between the second and third hearing, talks with law enforcement and district attorney continued until an agreement was met. An amendment was drafted to do the following: 1) Reduce drug felonies to misdemeanors for the first 2 offenses; on the 3rd conviction the individual would receive a felony 2) All "residue cases" are considered misdemeanors and will not count towards a possible felony conviction. 3) Data collection on drug felonies. These amendments were adopted and the House Judiciary passed HB 2355 with an 8-2-1 vote.

#### Where this bill is at now:

HB 2355 is currently in Ways and Means subcommittee on Public Safety.

#### Where will the bill go next:

If funding for the HB 2355 is secured, it will then go to the House floor. The bill will cost \$4.5M - \$5M.

### ***Ethnic Studies HB 2845***

#### Origin of issue brief:

- Came out of the "K-12 Inclusive Curriculum" Issue brief- From Max (UO)
- Was not selected to be on the Statewide Student Survey
  - Coalition leaders: OSA, Momentum Alliance, APANO, Chalkboard and Oregon Education Association

#### Background and Problem:

Oregon has a harmful and persistent legacy of racial inequities in K-12 education. Communities of color, immigrants and refugees are growing in population, and today make up 25% of our state and yet they remain deeply under-represented in curriculum as well as in the education workforce. In 31 out of the 220 Oregon School Districts, the percentage of students of color ranges between 40-82%. Oregon has a goal to graduate 100% of high school students,



with 40% going on to receive a college degree and 40% to receive a technical degree. However the systemic barriers to achievement threaten to worsen existing disparities and relegating students of color to the poorest outcomes. We can close the current opportunity gaps that disproportionately affect our children and youth of color starting with the earliest years of education

#### Solution:

Oregon needs a way to acknowledge the contribution of all people in US and Oregon history.

#### Summary of the Bill:

- Define Ethnic Studies for K-12 schools consistent with established academic and critical practice that provides instruction on the histories, contributions and perspectives of people of color, indigenous peoples, women, immigrants, refugees, LGBTQ people, and other historically marginalized and underrepresented groups, and shall critically engage ways in which race, ethnicity, and other socially constructed markers of difference operate in systemic and structural ways.
- Creates a workgroup to develop Ethnic Studies standards to guide K-12 Districts over a four year period, inclusive of students, teachers and experts in the field;
- Direct the State Board of Education to adopt Ethnic Studies standards into the Social Studies Standards;
- Ensure that standards are being supported within the Oregon Department of Education Division 22 Standards.

#### History of the bill:

HB 2845 started off in House Education. During the first hearing advocates from Oregon Student Association, Momentum Alliance, Oregon Education association, the Advocacy Commissions and community members all spoke in favor of the bill. The Ethnic Studies bill had a second hearing where Legislators asked Rep. Hernandez about different parts of the bill. There was discussion from Rep. Parrish about adding an amendment that would add an expert on Jewish and Middle Eastern studies to the advisory group. The amendment was later drafted and adopted by the House Education committee and the committee passed HB 2845 with a vote of 7-1-1.

#### Where this bill is at now:

HB 2845 is currently in Ways and Means subcommittee on Education.

#### Where will the bill go next:



HB 2845 received a minimal fiscal, which means it won't cost the state a significant amount of money. If the Ethnic Studies bill can be released out of Ways and Means, it will then go to the House Floor for a vote.

### ***Mental Health Taskforce SB 231***

#### Origin of issue brief:

- Came out of the "Mental Health First Aid Training" Issue Brief - From Lina (LBCC)
- Was selected to appear on the statewide student survey - Students scored it 6th on the priority list.

#### Background and Problem:

According to the American Psychological Association, student mental health problems are on the rise. More students than ever are seeking counseling (which is a great thing) but while many are getting help, there is an untold number who haven't and aren't receiving resources about what to do or where to go.

While many excellent resources exist already for folks struggling with mental health issues, the information is not widely available or lacking on some campuses in this state.

The APA also found that: anxiety is the top presenting concern among college students (41.6%), followed by depression (36.4%), relationship problems (35.8%), suicidal ideation (16.1%) and alcohol abuse (9.9%)

#### Solution:

Oregon needs to pursue recommendations from mental health experts as to what the state needs to be doing to support students.

#### Summary of the Bill:

Establishes Task Force on Student Mental Health Support. Directs task force to investigate mental health issues and substance abuse disorders among students, with emphasis on college recruitment, retention and completion. Requires task force to submit report to interim committee of Legislative Assembly related to higher education no later than July 1, 2018. Sunsets December 31, 2018.

#### History of the bill:

SB 231 first started in Senate Human Services. Students from the Oregon Student Association testified on the need for mental health services on campuses. Students also discussed wanting



to add a section around drug addiction and how it relates to mental health to the task force. The amendment was later adopted when the Senate Human Services voted it out of committee unanimously. SB 231 was then sent to the Senate Government efficiency and accountability committee where students continue to defend why this taskforce should be prioritized. It was later voted out of 2nd Senate committee unanimously.

Where this bill is at now:

SB 231 was sent to Ways and Means subcommittee on General Government. The Mental Health Taskforce bill received a wide range for its fiscal impact statement starting from \$13,000-\$300,000. OSA has and will continue to work with the HECC to clarify the staffing levels we will need for the taskforce and to ensure that the bill will not cost the state a significant amount of money.

Where will the bill go next:

If funding is secured for SB 231 it will then go to the Senate floor for a vote.

***Survivor Amnesty SB 762***

Origin of issue brief:

Background and Problem:

According to the National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC), 1 in 5 women and 1 in 16 men are sexually assaulted while in college. College freshmen and sophomore women appear to be at greater risk of being victims of sexual assault than are upperclassmen with 84% of women who reported sexually coercive experiences experienced the incident during their first four semesters on campus. Most students in their first and second year of college are under the age of 21.

Approximately ½ of all sexual assault survivors report that they were drinking alcohol at the time of the assault. While many students under the age of 21 are consuming alcohol and experiencing sexual assault, however, less than 10% of sexual, assaults on college campuses are reported. A contributing factor to low reporting rates is fear of receiving a Minor In Possession (MIP) offense for those under the age of 21 who are sexually assaulted while intoxicated.

Solution:

Oregon needs to remove barriers to reporting and recognize that alcohol can be used as a date rape drug.



### Summary of the Bill:

Exempts sexual assault victims and persons assisting sexual assault victims from arrest or prosecution for offense related to purchase or possession of alcoholic beverage by person under 21 years of age if evidence of offense was obtained because of contact with law enforcement agency or emergency medical services to report assault or obtain assistance.

### History of the bill:

SB 762 started off in Senate Judiciary. During its first hearing, legislators heard from student leaders from OSA about the importance of the bill. The Attorney General's office spoke in favor of the bill, but request that bystanders be included. An amendment was drafted and adopted by Senate Judiciary. Survivor Amnesty was voted out of committee unanimously. The bill was then sent to the Senate Floor where it was made to be a special item of the day. It was voted out of the Senate floor unanimously.

### Where this bill is at now:

SB 762 is now on the Speaker's desk waiting for referral.

### Where will the bill go next:

Survivor Amnesty will most likely go to House Judiciary.

## ***Gender and Name Change Documentation HB 2673***

### Origin of issue brief:

- No student issue brief was written
- This bill originated from Basic Rights Oregon

### Background and Problem:

Currently to update their birth certificate, a transgender person must go through a court to request a legal name change or gender marker amendment and then take the court order to the Oregon Health Authority's Vital Records Department. Many transgender Oregonians fear being publicly outed by having sensitive medical and personal information disclosed in open court and their gender and name changes posted on a public bulletin board. Some courts also require the disclosure of intrusive evidence of gender transition. In addition, the court process is inconsistent from county to county and can be costly and hard to navigate. Many people who are transgender cannot afford representation to guide them through the process. Transgender Oregonians disproportionately have lower incomes, often due to discrimination in employment, housing, and health care access.



### Solution:

Transgender Oregonians need access to a safer, more affordable and streamlined process for obtaining documentation that accurately reflects their gender identity.

### Summary of the Bill:

Creates a centralized administrative process to change name and gender marker on a birth certificate: Establishes a centralized administrative method at the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) for transgender Oregonians to change their name and/or gender marker. Modernize outdated public posting requirements.

### History of the bill:

HB 2673 started in the House Healthcare Committee. Basic Rights Oregon has been taken the lead on supporting this bill and navigating through some of the amendments that were suggested by committee members. The committee decided to do minor changes, but largely kept the bill intact. The Gender Documentation bill was voted out of committee 6-3 and sent to the House floor. It later passed the House Floor 37-23.

### Where this bill is at now:

HB 2673 was referred to Senate Judiciary

### Where will the bill go next:

Gender Documentation will be scheduled for a hearing in Senate Judiciary May 3rd.

### ***Other Policy highlights***

- Stable Homes HB 2004
  - Passed the House 31-27-2
  - Summary: Prohibits landlord from terminating month-to-month tenancy without cause after first six months of occupancy except under certain circumstances with 90 days' written notice and payment of amount equal to one month's periodic rent.
- Veterans Campus Resource centers SB 143
  - Passed the Senate 29-0-1
  - Summary: Directs Advisory Committee to review, consider and report to interim legislative committees relating to veterans no later than February 1, 2018, regarding programs to establish or expand campus veteran resource centers and campus veteran resource coordinators on campuses of community colleges and public universities to help veterans successfully transition from military service to



college life, succeed in college, complete educational goals and transition from college to workforce and community.

- Student Fee Autonomy for community colleges
  - Passed the House 34-25
  - Summary: Gives community college recognized student government authority to establish process and allocate mandatory student-initiated fees, subject to refusal under certain circumstances by board of education of community college district or president of community college.
- Reproductive Health Equity
  - Voted to Ways and Means 5-4
  - Summary: Requires health benefit plan coverage of specified health care services, drugs, devices, products and procedures related to reproductive health. Allows exemption for plans sold to religious employers. Requires Oregon Health Authority to implement program to reimburse costs of services, drugs, devices, products and procedures related to reproductive health provided to individuals who can become pregnant and who would be eligible for medical assistance if not for certain federal requirements. Prohibits discrimination in provision of health care coverage. Prohibits interference by public body in consenting individual's choice to terminate pregnancy. Prohibits public body's interference with health care provider terminating or assisting in termination of pregnancy of health care provider's patient, if health care provider is acting within scope of provider's license. Declares emergency, effective on passage.
- Open Educational Resources
  - Voted to Ways and Means 8-0-1
  - Summary: Establishes official name of open resources program as "Oregon's Open Educational Resources (OER) Program." Requires Higher Education Coordinating Commission to collaborate with public universities and community colleges to analyze and evaluate effectiveness of previously adopted open educational resources, to increase number of open educational resources used in courses and that are transferable between public universities and community colleges
- Universal Credit Transfer
  - Voted to Ways and Means 9-0
  - Summary: requires community colleges and public universities to develop unified statewide transfer agreements based on foundational curricula for each major course of study. Establishes requirements for transfer agreements and goals community colleges and public universities should seek to achieve in designing transfer agreements. Requires community colleges and public universities to establish transfer agreements for three major courses of study per year. Requires community college to provide specified information to student when student attending community college informs community college that student intends to transfer to public university. Requires Higher Education Coordinating Commission to regularly convene and consult with representatives from



community colleges and public universities for specified purposes. Requires each community college and public university to report annually to commission, for each unified statewide transfer agreement, on number of academic credits successfully transferred.

## Conclusion

In the next couple of months there will be a lot of movement on the budget and our policies. It is becoming more and more clear that we have a chance to raise revenue and keep tuition at a more affordable rate. But to have this be a reality students will need strong advocacy in these last two months. That means we will need students to participate as much as possible when opportunities arise to share our stories. We will also need strong testimonies and a clear message that students will no longer accept the state to balance on the backs of its most vulnerable.



## Statewide Student Advocacy Calendar

### MAY 2017

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
30	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
			HECC Funding Subcommittee Meeting (Tuition Discussion-Salem)	Full HECC Meeting (Tuition Setting-Salem)		
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
		May Revenue Forecast			*OSA Board Meeting (SOU) *Deadline for bills to be scheduled for a work session.	OSERA Symposium (SOU)
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31	1	2	3

## JUNE 2017

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
28	29	30	31	1	2	3
					<b>Deadline to hold work session</b>	
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
						<b>Student Transition (Bend)</b>
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	1

### How to Write Good Testimony: It's all about the story!

#### What makes a good story:

- Directly impacted by the issue: OSA is able to win victories because we work on issues that affect students and their stories are the reason these pieces of legislation move.
- Clarity and explicit connection to the issue (Problem, solution, action): a good story is clearly connected to the issue which you are advocating for. The best way to convey this is to frame your testimony as Problem, Solution, Action.
- The most specific the better: one good example is more memorable and impactful than a



laundry list of general statements.

- Share even obvious details. Simple examples like how much debt you have, how much the OOG is per term are important. It has been 20+ years, possibly, since a candidate went to college.
- Directly ask the legislators to support student priorities. Tie your story back to the priority issues and ask each candidate to vote the way you hope they vote.

### Examples of good messaging:

Underdeveloped Messaging	Compelling Messaging
Going to school is really a challenge for me.	I work 2 jobs and so do all of my roommates. I thought I could work one job and pay for most of my life and tuition, I was wrong. I am not complaining. I want to find ways to pay for school, but when I get home from work at 11pm every night it's hard to study.
Textbook prices are out of control.	Last term I paid \$400 for books I can't sell back now because next term a new version comes out.
Budget cuts have reduced the quality of my college experience.	I am a first generation student and I wish I could see an academic counselor each term, but I can't get in to see anyone.

### Logistics:

- You are writing a story that compels an elected official to vote the way you want them to
- Please start each story with: *“Chair (elected officials last name) and Vice Chair (elected officials last name) and members of (committee you are at) thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify in support of (state bill number)”*
- End each story with your direct ask
- Name, address, hometown



## Example Testimony

To: Joint Committee on Ways and Means  
From: Candalynn Johnson  
RE: Higher Education Funding and Revenue

Hello Chair Devlin and Chair Nathanson, Vice-Chairs Johnson, Rayfield, Winters, and Smith, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Candalynn Johnson and I am a senior, first generation college student. I graduated from Linn-Benton Community College and am finishing my last year at Oregon State University as the Executive Director of Government Relations for the student government on campus. I am a political science major who hopes to become a lobbyist, campaign organizer, or a non-profit organizer. Today I am testifying with my fellow students to stress the importance of keeping our institutions at an affordable level by reprioritizing higher education funding from the state.

I grew up in a family of six where both of my parents, my sister, and I attend college. As of right now I am the only one who has transferred to OSU, but I will not be the last one in my family to attend. My parents decided to go back to school, because they found it necessary in order to improve our family's future. Education is what low-income families like mine are depending on in order to improve the quality of our lives and our future generations. This year is actually the first year that I was able to pull off not working two jobs while attending school full time because I got my current job with the student government on campus, but many students aren't so lucky and end up having to work 2 or 3 jobs to make ends meet along with taking out a huge amount of loans. I receive the Oregon opportunity grant, work 20 hours a week, have applied for several scholarships and still will be graduating in June with \$26,378 in debt – a small amount of debt compared to some. This is felt even more deeply with students who live paycheck by paycheck in order to pay rent, electricity, textbooks, and food, and I worry that these large tuition hikes, caused by a lack of state funding for our institutions, will cause more students to decide that they just can't pick tuition over food, or choose the being able to put food on the table for their children will have to come before attaining an education, as my father could very well decide to do instead of transferring to OSU if tuition continues to rise.

When you are in student government you start to hear students become very hopeless about their situation and you here the stories of hard working students who just couldn't make it. I personally know several students who had to drop out because they just couldn't afford to keep going to school. It is so tiring to fight each year and have students see the result as another increase in costs in their empty bank accounts. Oregon ranks 46th in the nation for funding per student, well below the national average. How is this a sustainable system for the state where we push students out who can barely afford education and how does this help our economy by



making it even harder for young people to become educated workers? How much longer is the state going to make our institutions supplement funding on the backs of poor students before higher education doesn't have any students left like me. Over 70% of OSU funding comes from students and the fact is students don't have any more money to give. It may seem like the easiest choice to cut funding from higher education due to the deficit, but the fact is that students cannot afford to pay that difference and our institutions will make us if the state doesn't start funding higher education again. Stop putting college students on the back burner. Stop drowning students in debt.

That is why I ask the committee to fund Universities at \$765 million, Community Colleges at \$636 million, and the Oregon Opportunity Grant at \$155 million, because education should be not be debt sentence.