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April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2015

To: Ways and Means Joint Subcommittee on Education  
From: Curtis Kauer  
RE: Funding for Community Colleges

Co-Chair Komp, Co-Chair Monroe, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Curtis Kauer and I am a first year student at Central Oregon Community College, and I am here with the Oregon Student Association to urge you to increase funding for higher education.

Growing up in a working class home in central Oregon I was taught from an early age that going to college was a necessity. If I wanted to move up the economic ladder and be able to get a job that adequately supported me and my family I had to achieve some level of higher education. I chose to attend Central Oregon Community College because for me it was local and the most affordable option. Due to the accelerated costs of tuition, multiple times I have been faced with the reality of having to drop out.

The first term I attended COCC I accumulated a large balance on my student account that without payment meant I would not be able to continue attending college. My mother agreed to help me financially with this balance, but due to the financial burden this put on her, she almost had to file for bankruptcy. The thought that a person would have to file bankruptcy to support their son or daughter in gaining an education is outrageous!

I know my story is not unique to the student experience in Oregon. Families across this great state are stretching themselves to the point of breaking in order to try and better their children's lives or themselves. If we are promoting the idea that in order to be successful in this nation of "opportunity" you need to obtain a higher education degree, why would we continue to force families like myself, into financial turmoil.

Our state needs to reinvest in higher education and is why I support support budgets of \$560 million for community colleges and \$755 million for public universities and encourage this committee to pass them.

Please remember my story when voting on this bill. Thank you for letting me speak with you today.

Sincerely,  
Curtis Kauer  
Central Oregon Community College