

TO CHAIR WAGNER AND THE MEMBERS OF THE SENATE

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

FROM: Catherine A Meyer, Member of the American Association of University
Women of Oregon

RE: Support for Senate Bill 794

I write this in support of Senate Bill 794.

A significant number of women attending our public colleges and
community colleges today do so while also caring for dependent children.

Unfortunately, Oregon doesn't track how many of our students find themselves
in this situation. We can't determine whether student parents graduate at the
same or different rates. We don't know whether student parents drop out at the
same or different rates as students without children, take longer to obtain a
degree or feel they must limit their career aspirations.

National data show that 53% of student parents will not complete a
degree. Only 28% of single mothers graduate with a degree or certificate
within 6 years of enrollment and another 55 percent leave school before earning

any college credential at all. Low-income college students with children are
25% less likely to obtain a degree than low-income adults without children.

Supporting students with children is a critical component of promoting
racial and ethnic equity in education, as rates of parenthood vary substantially
by race and ethnicity. Among African American female undergraduates
nationwide, for example, 47 percent are raising dependent children while in
school.

The bottom line —A college education provides dignity to the student

and a way up and out of economically fragile situations. However, the impact of a college education extends far beyond the student parent. Parents who complete or are obtaining a college degree serve as essential role models for their children, and their educational success reaches to the second and third generations. They also become income generating citizens of Oregon's economy.

I urge you to support Senate Bill 794.

Respectfully,

Catherine A Meyer

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