



To: House Committee on Revenue
From: Portland Community College
Re: HB 3357

Dear members of the House Committee on Revenue,

HB 3357 is a creative and important change that incentivizes low-income families to continue their education and improve their economic outcomes. This bill allows for independent degree seeking students to use the dependent care income tax credit.

Family wage jobs in Oregon require a degree more than 80% of the time. Furthermore, middle-skill jobs, those that require more than a high school diploma and less than a bachelor's degree, are among the most in need in Oregon. Among those enrolling in programs (either full-time or part-time degree programs) are students who are working low-wage jobs in order to make the rent or mortgage, afford childcare, and put food on the table. These students who are looking to change their income earning potential and provide for their family are the Oregonians our tax policy should be helping.

At Portland Community College, 58% of our students are part-time. They are working 2 and 3 jobs to keep their head above water and go to school. The average graduating class at PCC is 45% 1st-generation. 30% of our students having children. What's worse is that 13% of our students don't know where they will lay their head at night and 66% experience food insecurity.

Given the rising costs of housing and living expenses in the Portland Metro area, this issue is especially impacting college access and completion. Under the vision and leadership of President Mitsui, PCC launched Pathways to Opportunity last spring to address these issues. PCC has been leading a statewide coalition that includes all 17 community colleges, to increase awareness and find solutions to the financial hardships impacting students' ability to equitably attend and complete college. PCC's local Pathways to Opportunity initiative builds off of the impactful student and faculty-led work like the Food Justice cohorts, Panther Pantries, Housing and Food Insecurity Task Force, and Financial Literacy Efforts. HB 3357 is another solution.

The most significant victory came as a result of partnering and collaborating with DHS, SNAP student eligibility policy was changed to increase SNAP access to more income eligible community college students across Oregon. Community college students who are enrolled in CTE or Career Pathways programs, courses, or pre-requisites do not need to meet any other student eligibility criteria like working 20 hours per week or placed in a work study position.

Higher education policy and state investment goes further when students have the support they need to stay in school and complete their educational goals. HB 3357 can go a long way to helping this hardworking population. We ask for your yes vote on HB 3357.

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