I thank you for the opportunity to speak this afternoon.

I am a 3rd year student at Oregon State University, majoring in Physics. Throughout my time in Corvallis, I have embedded myself in the University community. I am enrolled in a demanding degree program, I work as a computer programmer for the university, and I am involved in student government. In every aspect of my connection to OSU, I have seen the impacts of severely insufficient funding first-hand. I hope to provide insight into the environment this lapse in funding has created today.

In the Physics program, the current course structure leads to a set of courses traditionally taught in the 2nd year to be populated by 1st through 4th year students. The decline in quality of education is tremendous due to the gaps in knowledge between students. When I asked faculty why new course structures have not been implemented, the response was overwhelming: "our department is critically understaffed".

At my position as a student programmer, I work in a small team that standardizes data distribution throughout the University. It is a strategic team that increases the efficiency of nearly every branch of the University. Months ago, one of the two full-time programmers left for another position. The remaining programmer has since been doing the work of two employees at a fraction of the wage that he could make in industry. His work is truly a public service. The position has been intentionally unfilled in hopes that it is not eliminated entirely. These are not sustainable working conditions, and should they continue, I do not see a future for our team. The direct consequence will be higher operating costs for every branch of the University.

This is just one of many examples of how insufficient funding drives away OSU's most hardworking and talented employees. The consequences are compounding, and impact the wellbeing of everybody in the state of Oregon.

Finally, my involvement in student government has been eye-opening. The environment everywhere in the University is one of fear. Ever-tightening budget cuts have lead departments critical to student success and livelihood, such as programs that provide assistance to low-income students in emergency situations, to fight over pennies of student fee dollars.

Most illustratively, I recall the impact of proposed cuts to cultural and diversity programs. A group of Native American students spoke in front of ASOSU, as the campus Longhouse had no choice but to look towards cutting programs and renting out the center to private parties to keep its doors open. These brave students came forward and relived their past traumas, sharing the incredible barriers they had to overcome just to attend OSU. They communicated that the Longhouse is the one place on campus where they do not feel isolated and alone. Nearly every one of them communicated that there is

no chance that they would be alive today with it. Through tears, they explained how renting out their space to outside groups was yet another case of our society stealing the scarce remnants of their own.

I share my perspective with you to show you that insufficient higher education funding today results in more than the declining quality of education. It actively endangers the livelihoods of Oregon's most vulnerable, and has wide reaching social impacts. The proposal to flatline higher education funding will only make this dysfunction worse, and will directly result in compounding suffering. Continuing to do so is negligent, and directly disadvantages students, faculty, and the entire state of Oregon. Thank you for your time.