

April 10, 2019

Co-Chair Roblan, Co-Chair Smith Warner, Co-Vice Chair Knopp, Co-Vice Chair Smith and Members of the Joint Committee on Student Success

Subject: Don't Leave College Students Behind in New Education Funding

Legislators have a once-in-decade opportunity to invest in Oregon students and reform Oregon's tax system, but the current plan laid out in House Bill 2019 leaves college students behind.

By 2020, 65 percent of new jobs are expected to require education and training beyond high school. To provide Oregonians the opportunity they need to thrive and for businesses to help grow the economy, we need to support students from cradle to career. Since Measure 5, Oregon students have seen tuition increases vastly outpace inflation while programs and services have been cut because state investment fell further behind. Student debt is higher than it's ever been.

I was born and raised in Romania, and I was part of a very loving and supporting family that tried their best to instill in me values like honesty, integrity and hard work. Ever since I was a kid, I dreamed of working in the medical field. My parents could not provide any financial help so I knew that if I ever wanted to do something with my life, I would have to do it on my own. I started cleaning toilets, standing all day while working in retail, milking cows at dairy farms, and babysitting to make enough money to sustain myself. When I was 27 years old I got the opportunity to move to the United States. I decided to leave behind family, friends and everything that meant home, and make the jump into the unknown. In January, 2013 I started working as a caregiver in Adult Foster Home. Two years later I became a CNA.

Encouraged by the nurses coming into our home and resident's families, I decided to go back to school. I enrolled as a full time student last fall, and I am in the process of obtaining all the prerequisites necessary to register for the nursing program. I am planning to obtain the Associate Nursing Degree at PCC and continue my education to a four year University to obtain my BSN. While it is a constant struggle to juggle working and studying and paying for classes, pursuing this dream is worth it all. My final and biggest goal is to become a Gerontology Nurse Practitioner. I feel this is what makes my heart happiest. Community colleges play a huge role in helping students like me get the skills they need to advance their careers.

We urge you to support Governor Kate Brown's call for including post-secondary education in the spending proposal before this committee.

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