

Hello Chair Doherty and members of the committee,

My name is Katrina Kofsky and I am a CTE student, a criminal justice major, and legislative intern for Portland Community College.

I support HB 4160, because we need a greater focus on higher education. This workgroup is important because it will bring to light a program that I found valuable. I am a first-generation college student.

I attended Jefferson High School and had the amazing opportunity to participate in PCC's middle college program. This allowed me to graduate with a middle college diploma that included college credit to go towards my future degree.

Following my graduation, I attended a university in San Francisco, California on a full merit scholarship for a little over a year before the living expenses just became too much for me to handle. I'd thought that my chance at a degree was gone at that point.

It wasn't until I came back to Oregon and was welcomed to Portland Community College with open arms that I realized - there was hope.

Now, in March I will become the first person in my family to achieve a higher education degree. Additionally, I have maintained my spot on the Dean's list, honor roll, have received merit scholarships, and have been invited to join several honorary educational programs – including the National Academy of Future Physicians at Harvard Square, PSU's Educational Talent Search, and the National Society of High School Scholars.

Even with the lower cost of tuition at PCC, and with my financial aid, it is still a struggle for me to continue paying my own way to pursue my degree. This quarter alone I have had to juggle a job, an internship, and a full-time schedule at school - and I still find myself barely affording transportation, supplies, and even food.

HB 4160 will suss out the programs that are working to help students like me get to graduation. We have a lot of good stories like this around the state, we should learn about what's working and what's not working so Oregon can see more graduates. Please vote yes on HB 4160.

Sincerely,

Katrina Kofsky