

Written Testimony for SB 2093

I write in support of SB as a member of the public and as a woman of color who recently completed her doctoral degree. I know the hardships, barriers, and systemic inequities that currently exist which make reaching the goal of receiving my PhD nearly impossible! My career has been in two primary areas: education and equity. Certainly by now, there is NO question that there are significant education equity gaps throughout Oregon. I've lived here over 35 years and my children, now adults, have lived experiences of receiving an education in Oregon's educational systems. I've worked alongside business owners in our state who recognize the need to build Oregon's current economic state. Therefore, we must increase the number of high school graduates desirous of continuing their education and/or vocational training. What does this mean? What does this require? This reality based in data and facts, requires a greater investment in our students than just the Oregon Promise. Struggling students, especially post Covid, are desperate for opportunities to apply for state grants that are focused on addressing the equity gaps in our education systems. We must invest in our future! We must offer our students hope for reaching their fullest potential to complete their certificates and degrees. One does not have to search deeply to understand current research data that clearly indicates state grants increase the opportunities for students who realize there is a financial path they can access in order to earn their postsecondary credentials. I invite the legislators addressing SB 2093 to apply an equity lens to the impact and implications this bill could have on matters of race/ethnicity, income, geography, and existing systemic educational equity gaps. I invite you as legislators to ponder what the following changes would offer to underrepresented groups of students across our state ready to complete their degrees. Please consider the following key components of the redesign proposed in HB 2093:

- 1.Remove the \$50 co-pay for students
- 2.Double the minimum award amount
- 3.Change the GPA requirement from 2.50 to 2.00
- 4.Allow students to apply the Oregon Promise at a University
 - a.Consider the implications for DACA and Undocumented students academically prepared to start their collegiate experiences at the university level
- 5.Not count credits earned in high school against program credit limits

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