



*House Committee on Education: Chair Teresa Alonso Leon, Vice-Chair Courtney Neron, Vice-Chair Suzanne Weber and other members of the Committee*

**Testimony for the Community College Funding Bill (HB 2907)**

The American Association of University Women has a long tradition of supporting women's educational funding. In this time of economic and social upheaval, aiding women of all races, ages and disabilities in gaining access to higher education seems perhaps even more critical than in the past. Passage of HB 2907 would fully fund community colleges at \$702 million for the 2021-23 biennium

According to Oregon Community College Association, funding at this level could keep tuition increases to an average of 3.5 percent per year statewide. Every dollar cut from the Community College Support Fund must be made up by raising tuition or cutting programs and services, moving educational opportunities out of the reach of the Oregonians with the most need.

Colleges serve the communities that have been most affected by the pandemic and wildfires. Many community college students face barriers made worse by these catastrophic events and the move to online education. The pandemic is preventing many BIPOC (Black Indigenous and People of Color) and low-income students from enrolling. An entire cohort of students could be left behind by this pandemic if we do not address the challenges they face.

Community colleges are also essential to responding to a recession, offering shorter-term programs directed at getting unemployed Oregonians retrained and back in the workforce as quickly as possible. Community colleges are an educational safety net for all Oregonians at any skill or educational level, especially those who have traditionally been marginalized, and serve as a beacon of hope for economic and family recovery for Oregonians.

We of the Gresham Area Branch of AAUW Board are urging you to support \$702 million in funding for all of the community colleges throughout Oregon. Tuition and college debt are already unaffordable for too many families, particularly those impacted the most by the pandemic and wildfires. Please make community college funding a priority this legislative session.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'P. Taylor'.

Peggy Taylor  
Co-President

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'B. Jepsen'.

Bonnie Jepsen  
Co-President

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