

Co-Chairs Johnson, Steiner Hayward, Rayfield and Members of the Committee:

My name is Carina Miller and I live on the Warm Springs reservation in congressional district 2. It is the land of the Warm Springs, Wasco and Paiute Native American Tribes.

I am a Member of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs and descendant of the Yakama and Wasco people, and previously served as an elected leader on the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs Tribal Council. I am also a proud graduate of the University of Oregon, where I received a Bachelors of Science degree in Ethnic Studies. My ability to attend college and complete a degree has led to a successful and fulfilling career in public service, and I respectfully request that you support robust investments in public higher education, including funding the Public University Support Fund at \$900 million, and the Oregon Opportunity Grant at \$200 million.

Funding for Oregon's public universities creates opportunities for all Oregon students, and it is more critical now than ever. The pandemic has exacerbated existing inequities for BIPOC, lower-income, and rural students. It is critical that colleges and universities have adequate resources to address these disparities and ensure that all students have access to opportunity.

Our public universities and colleges have also played an important role in addressing both the pandemic and the wildfires that raged across our state, impacting people in my community. Reduced funding would challenge UO's ability to continue providing the fast, efficient, and accurate research required to ensure our state's equitable recovery from the multiple crises of 2020.

I also hope you will prioritize an expansion of the Oregon Opportunity Grant (OOG). The OOG is Oregon's largest state-funded, need-based grant program for college students. It is the state's only need-based aid program. Approximately 40,000 students receive Opportunity Grants each year, yet funding limitations have meant that the grant is not available to thousands of students who demonstrate significant financial need. Funding for the OOG should be increased in order to provide a realistic possibility of college affordability for Oregon's lower- and middle-income students.

As a mother and former social worker and head start teacher, I envision a state where all Oregon students – regardless of their circumstances – have the opportunity to be able to attend college and complete a degree. We owe this to our children and future generations.

Thank you for serving our community. I know you will be forced to make tough budget decisions this session, and I hope you will prioritize funding for public education.

Sincerely,
Carina Miller