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Co-Chairs Johnson, Steiner Hayward & Rayfield and Co-Vice Chairs Girod, Gomberg & Smith,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony to you and the entire Ways & Means Committee. My name is Jane Hill and I am the chair of the Blue Mountain Community College Board of Education. I live in Pendleton and I have been on the BMCC Board since 2018.

I appreciate your efforts to listen to constituents as you guide a complex budgeting process for all of Oregon. I have long been an advocate for student access and participation in the public education system. I believe everyone should have access to a viable and responsive community college.

Back in 2019 when the Joint Committee on Ways & Means met in the Bob Clapp Theatre at BMCC in Pendleton, I testified. I told the committee members that our Board took a stand in to draw public attention to the need for state funding - despite a \$1.8 million shortfall we chose to not increase tuition. We wanted the committee and the public to see we can't keep balancing the budget on the backs of students. You may be surprised to know it was the first time in 23 years the college did not raise tuition. But we have had to increase tuition each year since 2019.

Despite our funding challenges, the Blue Mountain Community College Board and staff are committed to the mission to provide responsive, high quality and innovative educational programs and services that promote personal and professional growth. This mission is designed to strengthen our communities. However, during COVID, this was difficult at times and we found disconnects in our systems and partners. We have stepped up to solve broken links and strengthen partnerships.

We have seen our enrollment decrease. So we know that our revenues and expenditures need rebalancing to better meet our new size. We are focused on right-sizing the college to better serve our students and communities. BMCC's goal is not only to right-size the college - which we are in the process of approving -- but also to have the right growth to meet community needs. This ranges from improved high school onramps to career and college, as well as upskilling and reskilling Oregon's workforce that was displaced due to the impacts of COVID-19. We are addressing the gaps for marginalized students, affordability and innovation funds.

BMCC will be using the short-term federal stimulus funds to support students to return to college. But you know that we need long-term continued support from the state in order to thrive. The federal investments are one-time dollars. Your investment is foundational. We need your support so that we may support students and our communities.

In the 2019-2021 biennium, the Community College Support Fund received \$641 million. To fully fund current services, colleges would need a state appropriation of \$702 million for the 2021-2023 biennium. At that funding level colleges 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 even more or cutting programs and services, moving educational opportunities out of the reach of the Oregonians with the most need.

We are counting on your vision for the future of Oregon students. Thank you again for taking the time to provide the Saturday hearing. I urge your support of \$702 million for the Community College Support Fund.