

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

My name is David Hattenhauer and I live in Eugene. I am a product of Oregon's rural public schools, I taught band and orchestra in the Springfield school district for 30 years, and I am a graduate of the University of Oregon School of Music. I respectfully request that you support robust investments in public education at all levels, including funding the Public University Support Fund at \$900 million, and the Oregon Opportunity Grant at \$200 million.

As a teacher in the Springfield school district, I saw firsthand how disinvestments in public education at all levels – cradle to career – have impacted the opportunities available to students. Classes like band and orchestra, which stimulate student brain growth, memory retention, language skills, and math skills, have long been on the chopping block. And many of my students felt that college was completely out of reach for them due to financial constraints – despite the fact that there was an elite research university just a few miles away.

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, like those who I went to high school with in Pendleton. It is critical that colleges and universities have adequate resources to address these disparities and ensure that all students have access to opportunity.

Oregon ranks near the bottom of states in terms of funding for student financial aid programs. In addition to funding for the services that support students throughout their academic careers, our state needs to make a statement that we care about making college more than just a dream. Funding limitations have meant that the Oregon Opportunity 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, so that all students have the opportunity to attend college, complete a degree, and have the meaningful career of their choice – whether that's as a public servant, entrepreneur, or a high school band teacher.

Additionally, our public universities and colleges have played an important role in addressing the pandemic. In fact, I just saw on the news that the UO will be vaccinating local high school students who are now eligible. Reduced funding would challenge UO's ability to continue providing the fast, efficient, and accurate research, testing, and vaccinations required to ensure our state's equitable recovery.

As someone who grew up in eastern Oregon, and who now lives outside of the Portland metro area, I appreciate your attention to the budget needs of our entire state, and I urge you to prioritize funding for public education.

Sincerely,
David Hattenhauer
Eugene, Oregon