

April 21, 2021

Joint Ways and Means Committee
900 Court Street, NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: HB 2412A – Funding for ASPIRE, AVID, BUILD EXITO, CollegePossible & TRiO

Chair Co-Chair Betsy Johnson, Co-Chair Dan Rayfield, and Co-Chair Elizabeth Steiner Hayway.

I'm writing you today to urge you support and fund HB 2412A. This bill provides funding for five different college access programs that were funded in the Governor's Recommend Budget. These programs provide valuable access and support for students from low-income backgrounds, Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) and first-generation college students to help them achieve their post-secondary goals.

Investment in these programs matters today more than ever before. COVID-19 has laid bare the systemic inequities felt by BIPOC communities and communities impacted by poverty. According to the most recent data, across all types of institutions, immediate enrollment of students from low-income high schools has fallen by nearly 30%. These finds are more troubling because students from low-income backgrounds are much less likely to enroll in college later and get back on track.

Investing in these five programs in HR 2412A supports Oregon and the HECC's goals of increasing historically underserved students' pathways to access higher education and earn their degrees. It takes both a strong education system and community partners who deliver quality programs and measurable results to improve student outcomes across the state.

Programs like these are transformative and I strongly urge the committee to pass and fund HB 2412A.

Sincerely,
Nicole Ward
TRIO Alumnus
Portland OR