

To: Sen. Betsy Johnson, Sen. Elizabeth Steiner Hayward, Rep. Dan Rayfield and members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means

When I was 17 years old, I ran away from home and got myself into a good deal of trouble. After three years of rebelling, I decided it was time to become a functioning part of society, but I had no idea where to start. Luckily, the local community college welcomed me in and helped me figure out a way to get back on track. This service was a God send as I was living on my own and struggling to pay bills on a minimum wage income. If it had not been available, I would never have moved out of that life. Today, I am asking you to fully fund community colleges so that every person, no matter their circumstance, continues to have the opportunity to become the greatest asset to our community they can be.

Fully funding community colleges is good economic policy. With help from these community gems, low-income citizens become higher income citizens, citizens that pay more taxes, citizens that are more likely to give back to the community by becoming nurses, firefighters, or small business owners. Some may even be so inspired by the experience that they go on to become nursing professors at their local community college (like myself). Education is a gift to the community as those with it see the potential in every individual they meet. Wise policy makers fund that potential to grow the strongest communities.

Community colleges serve students regardless of education and skill level, providing a true educational safety net and primary access point to economic opportunity. Community colleges like CCC need adequate funding from the state to continue providing valuable education in high-demand industries. It makes sense for our students, it makes sense for businesses, and it makes sense for the economy. Please support \$702 million in funding for community colleges.

Please make community college funding a priority this legislative session. Thank you.

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