

Hello members of the ways and means committee,

My name is Tara Schoap and I am a student at Lane Community College working towards a degree in Sociology. Today I am asking for you to invest \$290 M in the Oregon Opportunity Grant, the state's largest need based financial aid program.

I qualify for the Oregon Opportunity Grant but do not receive it. The strain on myself and my family of paying for school during this pandemic is immense. In order to afford tuition and fees, textbooks, rent, and food I had to empty my entire savings account, and find myself unable to make bills at the end of each month due to the huge cost of higher education. The impact on my education of this economic reality is absurdly deep and wide reaching. I have to worry everyday if I am going to be able to house and feed myself in this pandemic, and the lack of available funding for folks in situations like mine is one of the biggest obstacles to our educational (and financial) success. Investing in funding for Community College as well as state Universities in an investment not only in students, but the future of Oregon.

Please remember my story as you work with your colleagues to set the budget for the next biennium, and please invest \$290 M in the Oregon Opportunity Grant. Thank you..