

Hello members of the ways and means committee,

My name is Austin McKittrick and I am a student at Lane Community College working towards a degree in Film studies. 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. The impact on my education of this economic reality is that I not only cannot afford to go to a school of my choosing do to the ridiculous cost of attendance, but it also has a highly detrimental effect on my family and our living situation. My mother has cancer which entails exorbitant medical bills for me and my family to shoulder, and on top of that we need to pay out of pocket just so I can get an education and better our living situation. And just in case you are wondering, I am not the only person is a circumstance like this.

Right now, over $\frac{3}{4}$ of Oregon students who qualify for and need the Oregon Opportunity Grant do not receive it, purely due to severe underfunding. If Oregon is going to recover from COVID-19, it is vital that we invest in student aid so that students can afford to finish degrees and find good paying jobs after school. Now is a critical time to get the state where it needs to be regarding financial aid access.

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.