

Hello Chairs Johnson, Rayfield, and Smith Warner and members of the committee,

My name is Arlette Tapia and I am a second year student at Western Oregon University majoring in Social Science.

I am writing to ask you to invest in higher education and financial aid opportunities for students, especially during these COVID times, with a specific focus on \$290M for the Oregon Opportunity Grant.

This past year has been very challenging for students due to the financial barrier. As a student who has struggled with financial aid, I understand the difficulties to find financial assistance. One of the funds that has helped me during my college years has been the Oregon Opportunity Grant. I urge you to continue investing in the grant, as it has helped many students continue their education. 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. We are asking that you take in consideration the investment of \$290M for the Oregon Opportunity Grant for the 21-23 biennium. This will ensure that there is enough money to fund students whose household income is from \$0 to \$100,000.

I am a first generation and low income student, and I understand the barriers that students may encounter. For this reason I am writing to ask that you consider my request and listen to student voices who are struggling as well. Investing in higher education and financial aid will open doors for the students and allow them to pursue their dreams.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Arlette Tapia Lopez