

May 3, 2021

Oregon Joint Committee on Ways and Means  
Subcommittee on Education  
900 Court Street, NE  
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Investment in College Possible Oregon

Co-Chair Frederick, Co-Chair McLain and members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education, thank you for the opportunity to share my story. My name is Maria Silva and I am a student at Riverside Jr/Sr High School. I'm writing to urge your support of the 2021-23 Governor's Recommended Budget request for a \$1 million investment in the HECC budget for College Possible Oregon.

When I first learned about College Possible they were recruiting students to join during lunch time at my school. What caught my attention was that they were not shy at all and would go right up to students during their lunch time and even have conversations with them. They tried to connect with students through similar interests and showed how passionate they were. Seeing how they were trying to recruit students was different from what other programs would do since the majority just sat at tables waiting for students to approach them. After seeing that, I decided to talk to them and sign up for more information.

Being able to learn early on what the college process would consist of helped prepare me for the challenges I later faced and for the main reason I want to go to college. That reason being that I simply want to better myself. What I mean by that is I want to be able to succeed in my future career/goals and in my life. Of course it is much more complex than just saying I want to succeed. However, College Possible has been able to provide me the help to center my mind on what exactly I consider success and how will I get to that point.

I've decided to attend college to prepare for the business industry. My goal is to major in marketing or business administration. However, I also intend to get into real estate later in life. In addition, I hope to have multiple sources of income to support the lifestyle I intend to have. By going into business I hope to be able to get involved in organizations where I can help support people. Having a coach that provides me all the necessary help to research ways to get there and help me prepare for the first steps I must take, has helped me stay realistic and positive at the same time.

College Possible has supported me in many ways varying from being a support system to being a guide. Without any financial help I would not be able to go to college, but my

coaches have made sure to provide me multiple scholarships I qualify for every month and answer any college questions I may have. They also never hesitate to directly reach out and connect with schools to ask questions students may not be comfortable sharing. A memory I have of College Possible that shows how much they care about preparing students for college is when they took us to visit five universities my junior year. Being able to meet new people and participating in events that helped better my understanding of college was an amazing opportunity to get closer to my coach and friends that would later on be a great support system for the challenges I have had to face.

Moreover I come from an immigrant family where I grew up in a low income household. The only person in my family that has attended college was my oldest brother; however, he only got his associates and did not remember much of what he had to do. So as a first generation student being in a completely different situation than my brother I would have had to take on the challenge of the college process all alone if not for College Possible. Furthermore, seeing the cost of going to college and all the difficulties to get there is mentally challenging to say the least. Especially since COVID began my junior year. That alone brought even more obstacles to face. In spite of everything going on, College Possible was able to adapt to these new circumstances and aid us in preparing for college. Without a doubt College Possible has been a light of hope in between all the struggles I have had to take on this year.

Although the money aspect of college has been a challenge, College Possible has given me so many opportunities to work around that. I am looking at attending Oregon State University and I have been awarded their presidential scholarship. In addition, I was given the opportunity to be interviewed by a scholarship that is funded by College Possible that will also be helping me to be able to afford going to college. As I look forward to college next year, I am most excited to learn new things and get involved in things I always wanted to be involved in. I cannot wait to meet new people and grow closer to the person I hope to become.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my College Possible story with you today.

Sincerely,

Maria Silva  
Riverside Jr/Sr High School Student