

Hello, my name is Cade Tiller and I am from Burns Oregon. I am a sophomore at Treasure Valley Community College with one more term to go until I receive my Associates of Science Transfer Degree in Wildlife Science. I am writing this testimony regarding my support for SB 5528.

I think community colleges are important for many people for many different reasons, and I am proud to say I attended a great community college that set me on the right path and was some of the best years of my life. Here are a couple reasons why I attended a community college. First, it was affordable. With a lot of family problems and medical bills I could not afford to go to a University, and I think a lot of kids are in the same boat I am. We need community colleges for people who cannot afford to go to a 4 year but are still wanting to get an excellent education. TVCC was also pretty local to me, only being 2 hours away from my home town which was nice for me because I am a big home body. But most of all, it had the exact right high level program I was wanting to go into. There are plenty of jobs in the workforce that I think a lot of kids don't know about today that are incredible opportunities to make money while also having a fun, but yet still a very important job. In the natural resource program here at TVCC we are learning how to manage and research these natural resources, and setting us on the right path to employment. This program is apart of the CTE (Career and Technical Education) meaning it's a program that is designed to prepare students for high demand careers with an in depth learning that builds real-world skills. Community Colleges house the most CTE programs than any other type of school, and with better adequate funding we can continue to build these CTE programs that are getting kids into the workforce more than any other program. TVCC has helped me reach my educational and employment goals significantly, because with all of the courses I've taken here it has made me very employable for jobs in my field already. The last 2 summers I've worked as both a rangeland technician, and biological science aid. This summer I got hired with my dream job agency Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife as a Fisheries Technician. None of this would have been possible without just those 2 years at TVCC.

The pandemic has not been easy on any of us, and us TVCC students and other community college students included. To start, all of us in CTE programs get most of our education done hands on. So with covid, for the last year unfortunately we haven't gotten to get as much out of our classes as we normally would. It has all been online and we have not been able to get out in the field and learn hands on. This transition to online schooling has left many kids behind. Community colleges are where a lot of these kids are wanting to get started but because of virtual learning they are not getting the chance to. 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 are the affordable option for access to higher education in Oregon, particularly after the pandemic caused financial hardship for many Oregonians, including students like me. To fully fund current services, community colleges could keep raising tuition significantly to students statewide. This is important to students like me to continue to be able to afford schooling.

Community colleges are Oregon's economic recovery first responders. Community colleges are important to responding to the recession brought by Covid and the Wildfires. Community colleges offer shorter-term programs directed at getting unemployed Oregonians like me retrained and back to work as quickly as possible. Thanks to the natural resource dept. at TVCC I am working towards getting back into the workforce.

For all these reasons and many more, this is why I believe CC's are so important. Thank you