



American Association of University Professors

Academic Freedom for a Free Society

May 10, 2021

Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education
Oregon State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301

RE: SB 5528

Co-Chairs Frederick, McLain, and Members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Ramin Farahmandpur. I am a Professor in the College of Education at Portland State University. I am also the President-Elect of AAUP Oregon. On behalf of the more than 6300 members of the American Association of University Professors in Oregon, I urge you to support adequate funding of Oregon's public universities.

With state funding shortfalls and ever-escalating college tuition, adequate funding of Oregon's public universities is crucial, particularly for the growing population of first-generation college students and BIPOC students for whom the value of a college education is not only an entry point into the middle-class, but also a means to intellectual growth, moral development, and civic engagement.

Without adequate funding, universities will likely face more course cancellations, more program eliminations, and more employee layoffs—all of which will directly impact the quality of education that our students deserve. In addition, Covid has shown the critical importance of health care coverage and SB 551/HB 3007 would finally extend health care coverage to the state's 1700 eligible part-time faculty members who work full time, but do not have coverage merely because they work at more than one institution.

With adequate funding, we can invest in programs to address institutional racism, uplift poor rural Oregonians from economic destitution, and bridge the digital divide between poor and affluent students, which has been exacerbated by the pandemic. Adequate funding would also allow programs and services, such as the Oregon Opportunity Grant and HB 2835, the student navigator bill, to better serve our students, especially those who are experiencing food and housing insecurity.

I implore you to vote in support of SB 5528 with \$900 million for public higher education and to pass SB 551/HB 3007 to finally provide healthcare coverage for hard working faculty in this critical time of need.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,

Ramin Faramhandpur
President Elect, AAUP-Oregon