

May 10, 2021

Dear Co-Chairs McLain, Frederick, and members of the subcommittee,

My name is Theresa Mai, and I am a junior at Oregon State University. I am here to urge the Ways and Means committee to expand the Oregon Opportunity Grant because I understand the importance of the grant for students like me.

To provide context, my mother never finished elementary school because she was needed for the family farm while my father barely graduated high school because English wasn't his first language. Even if they worked as hard as they can, I saw how one's education can impact their lives, and because of this, I knew that I needed to pursue an opportunity that was never a possibility for them, a college education.

Only one obstacle that stood in my way: the cost. With the Oregon Opportunity Grant, Pell Grant, and a scholarship from Oregon State University, it provided me a sense of relief because instead of worrying about dropping out of school like my cousins did, I get to pursue the very opportunities that would have never happened otherwise. Now, I am both proud and excited to say that I will be the first person in my family to graduate college next Spring.

Even with this great news, I am only one of the lucky ones. Only 1 in 4 eligible students actually receive the Oregon Opportunity Grant, which is why it is more important than ever to expand the Oregon Opportunity Grant, ensuring students from low-income families are not priced out of a college degree and further opportunity.

With this in mind, I urge the committee to remember my story as we work on expanding the Oregon Opportunity Grant for our college students.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Theresa Mai', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Theresa Mai