

Mt. Hood Community College

Administrative Services
26000 SE Stark Street
Gresham, OR 97030

February 7, 2022

RE: SJR 203

Senate Finance and Revenue Committee Members,

Under article XI-G, \$8-million is dedicated to Mt. Hood Community College to assist with our efforts in updating and expanding our campus. In attempts to access these funds, we have taken to voters in three separate elections, a bond initiative that would have provided a match (2006, 2016 & 2017). Unfortunately for MHCC, voters have not passed a bond measure for our college since 1974.

As a result, our college, which started in 1966, has struggled to maintain our facility, and any major maintenance has been paid for by acquiring debt and redirecting general operating funds. Over the past twenty years, we have had to acquire debt of over \$33 – million to deal with capital needs. These needs include re-roofing our facility, investing in a new HVAC system, replacing our electrical system, upgrading our fire alarm system, and upgrading our technology infrastructure. The college repays this debt with general fund dollars. Additionally, the college allocates general fund dollars to deal with deferred maintenance annually. These dollars are not available for instructional purposes and student support. As a result, the residents we serve are experiencing unequal access to a community college education.

Our district has among the highest rates of poverty and low-income residents within the Portland metropolitan area, if not the state. Recently, an increased number of residents have been pushed out of Portland and into our district because of gentrification. Many of these are from minority communities.

While our college exists within the shadow of Portland, our district stretches East to Mt. Hood. It includes many of the small communities that exist within East Multnomah county and North Clackamas county. These small rural communities include Corbett, Cascade Locks, Sandy, and Welches. We are genuinely a rural college, and like our sister rural colleges, we have not been able to come up with the match needed to access the funds that would assist us greatly in updating our aging facility, expanding programs, and improving how we serve our communities.

I ask that you assist us in our educational efforts by supporting SJR 203, allowing voters to decide on amending the constitution, and providing us the ability to access these much-needed dollars.

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