

Submitter: Jennifer LeTourneau
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure: SB3

As a medical education leader in Oregon, I strongly support this bill. Via an educational endowment, my organization funds free financial services counseling to physicians in training. Prior to this effort, I surveyed the young physicians. Despite a median student loan debt of \$300,000, very few had made a budget, understood compound interest, nor considered funding their retirement accounts. Most of them felt stress from finances and that stress decreased with financial services counseling. When working with underrepresented minorities to encourage STEMM pathways, a common misconception is affordability of advanced degrees. Many do not understand student loans and thus do not consider professional school. Furthermore, predatory lending practices have perpetuated poverty and increased the wealth gap. Providing financial services counseling to high school aged individuals could help them better understand the risks of “payday loans”, the options, how to budget, and may help individuals succeed. The Oregon legislature, despite some cursory effort, has failed to protect its citizens from predatory lending practices. Allowing an interest rate of 36% on short term loans is unconscionable. The very least the Oregon legislature can do is enforce the opportunity for the consumer to be educated about the true cost/impact of these types of loans.