

Chair Lively, Vice Chair Ruiz, Vice Chair McIntire, and members of the House Higher Education Committee,

My name is Davida Jordan, I am a faculty member at Portland Community College, and I am here today to speak in support of HB 3121 that will help make critical investments in Open Oregon Educational Resources, Oregon's statewide textbook affordability program.

I have taught English to Speakers of Other Languages for over 20 years, and I have watched as the price of textbooks have gone up each year. I have also watched as teachers have become more empowered in their use of technology and more connected with each other, especially during the pandemic when everything went virtual.

If we combine those three factors: higher textbook prices, more tech savvy teachers, and more teachers collaborating, we can see how OER is the natural answer. With OER, teachers can create high quality materials that their students can use for free. Through Open Oregon, the teacher-creators can be paid and supported for their important work.

I just finished teaching a remote Reading 8 class today in which students pay \$0 for their textbooks. They pay a hefty amount for their tuition, so not having to pay for textbooks in addition to that is a welcome relief. In this class today, students from all over the world (Mexico, Costa Rica, Eritrea, Brazil, South Korea, Morocco, Guatemala, and India) studied from the OER textbook *Read Faster, Understand More*, which written by my PCC colleague Tim Krause and adapted by me. We read a fascinating article about the Salem Witch Trials and how the witch hunt mentality has played out over and over throughout history. Students practiced paraphrasing sentences from the reading on a shared Google Doc.

Because it is an OER, it can be modified as needed, quite different from a printed textbook, which students and teachers are stuck with. I have taught this class for multiple terms, and each time I teach it, I find typos that need to be fixed or activities that I want to change. I have the power to make those changes and tailor my textbook to the needs of my students.

I have seen many of my classes delayed or even derailed because of textbooks. Students can't afford the high cost of the textbook. The bookstore is sold out of the textbook. The student can't receive deliveries at their home because packages get stolen, so it's hard for them to order their textbook. There are supply chain issues.

OER has been a great solution to all of these problems. I had a student who had a trucking company with her husband and was taking my class remotely on her laptop from the cab of the truck. She somehow managed to get a copy of our required printed textbook at one of her stops, but it would have been so much simpler and more direct if she had been able to access our OER on her phone or laptop!

A good textbook is merely the jumping off point for a great class. However, without a good textbook that all the students have access to, the class falls apart. It lacks a uniting document.

Often the first few weeks of a class will be spent haphazardly with students sharing books, scrounging around to find a used copy of a book that they can afford, and teachers making photocopies of the textbook. Often, by the time every student has obtained a copy of the textbook, there has been quite a delay, and now the teacher really feels the pressure to use the textbook, no matter its relevance or quality. Otherwise, it feels like wasted money and effort, but as we all know, textbooks can be disappointing. They can be out of date and out of touch. There might only be a small section that really applies to what's happening in your classroom. But now you're stuck with it!

OER can eliminate all of that hemming and hawing. The book is ready to go from Day One. No excuses. It's what you as the instructor have determined will work for your population, and you've been able to refine it as you see fit.

Teachers have always created their own materials, but by using and creating OER and having the support of Open Oregon, we can take materials creation to the next level at no cost to the students.

Thank you for your time, and I hope that I can count on your support of HB 3121 with the -1 Amendment.