

MICHELSON

CENTER FOR PUBLIC POLICY

March 16, 2023

Honorable Jeff Reardon, Chair
House Committee on Higher Education
900 Court St. NE,
Salem Oregon 97301

RE: SUPPORT HB3132 (McIntire)

Dear Senator Reardon,

On behalf of the Michelson Center for Public Policy (MCP) I am pleased to write in support of HB3132 (McIntire) which provides necessary financial support for the Oregon Open Educational Resource (OER) Program by increasing current funding levels by an additional \$4,530,800, bringing the total program funding to \$5.2 million.

MCP is a nonprofit advocacy organization representing the interests of a network of philanthropic foundations including the Michelson 20 Million Minds Foundation, aiming to achieve positive outcomes in education and college affordability, equity, medical research, and animal welfare by working with elected officials and government agencies to achieve legislative and public policy change. Since 2010, our organizations have been leading in textbook affordability measures nationwide, including seeding the largest nonprofit OER publisher, OpenStax.

This year alone, over 3 million students across our nation's institutions of higher education will benefit from using one of Openstax's 38 titles, resulting in \$830 million in student savings. Oregon's colleges are amongst its benefactors, thanks to incredible faculty who have taken the initiative to revise their curriculum and replace costly textbooks with free materials.

The high cost of course materials continues to be a barrier for students across Oregon and the nation. A US Public Interest Research Group (PIRG) report found that 63% of students report skipping buying a textbook due to cost and 17% of students report skipping buying an access code due to cost. When students do not have the materials they need, they cannot succeed. OER provides students with high quality course materials, free of cost, which they can access on the first day of class and retain access to in perpetuity. Unsurprisingly, courses that use OER materials are linked to higher grades, retention rates, and engagement.

A recent US PIRG report *Open Textbooks: The Billion Dollar Solution (2nd Ed)* found that every dollar spent on OER grants provides an estimated \$10-20 in student savings. Based on these findings, HB3132 could save students between \$52-104 million which could then be used for tuition, living costs, or other needs.

For these reasons, we vigorously support HB3132 and ask for your "aye" vote when the measure comes before you for consideration. If you have questions about our positions, please contact Michelson 20 Million Minds Foundation OER Program Manager Cailyn Nagle at cailyn@20mm.org.

Sincerely,

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

Geoffrey L. Baum
Executive Director

Cc: Representative Emily McIntire
Members, House Committee on Higher Education