



Oregon Women's Rights Coalition

## SB 991- Student Loan Deduction -Oppose

Chair Meek, Vice-Chair Boquist and members of the committee

In a perfect world, there would be no student loans. In a perfect world we would fund our colleges and universities at the level they deserve, so after getting a AA or BA or BS. Oregonians could go out in the world, get a job, buy a house. But we are not in a perfect world.

We have, in Oregon not been in a perfect world since Ballot Measure 5 passed in 1990 and flipped the way we fund K-12 education in Oregon. That measure lead to immediate decrease in state funding for our colleges and universities, and an continual escalation in tuition and fees. There are some exceptions of guaranteed costs for four years.

You have heard the statistics on how many with student loans in Oregon and how much.

You mentioned Willamette University with a tuition of \$45,000. Yes but they award \$42 million of institutional scholarships last year. Ninety-nine percent of the undergraduate student body has some form of financial aid.

For OWRC to even consider endorsing this concept there would need to be real sideboards.

But we are looking at what other needs there are in Oregon. We have been especially connected to and advocating for Oregonians who are in the TANF program. Currently the cash award, something that can be used for housing, transportation, clothing is \$506 per month for a family of three, or less than 25% of the federal poverty level.

ODHS had a Policy Option package to take the TANF cash award up to 50% of the poverty level. But it did not get included in the Governor's Budget.

So until Oregon funds the poorest of our poor families OWRC will object to most tax deductions, credits or expenditures.

And then there is the Kicker!

Marcia Kelley

Public Policy Advocate