

March 20, 2023


Testimony in support of HB3120-2

Chair Lively, Vice-Chair Ruiz and Vice-Chair McIntire and members of the committee. On behalf of the board of College Possible Oregon (“CPO”) I am writing to request your support of HB 3120-2 in furthering the funding for organizations like ours that not only help historically underrepresented students graduate from high school, but also provide them with mentors until they graduate from college. This bill aligns with the recommendations of the Joint Task Force On Student Success for Underrepresented Students in Higher Education (JTUSHE). Throughout the listening process we heard time and time again from students across the state how valuable it was to have coaching and support from high school, the transition to college and throughout post-secondary education.

In the last biennium budget, HB 2412-2 invested \$5 Million in five College Access and Success organizations in the state. The intended purpose of those funds was to increase support services for Oregon’s historically underrepresented students and expand the number of students served across the state. College Possible received a \$1 Million investment that allowed us to increase the level of support for our students during the global pandemic while simultaneously expanding our program to a new high school which will have exponential growth over the next six years. When a student joins our program, we commit to six or more years of support until they earn their degree.

This is our tenth year of serving Oregon’s students, growing from 130 students ten years ago to over 1,600 students served today. We have appreciated prior years’ support from the legislature, enabling us to serve more students, including rural students, provide mental health support, and add career-focused services to help our students transition into jobs more effectively. Our students are graduating from college at about the state average, and more than two times the rate of similar student demographics that do not have supports like CPO.

Breaking the cycle of multi-generational poverty, preparing a successful workforce for the future, and reducing long-term dependence on social programs are outcomes we all want for Oregon and its students. Supporting HB3120-2 and establishing a competitive grant fund for college access and success organizations allows organizations like College Possible, AVID and Trio among others to have a more stable source of funding that enables us to expand services and remain sustainable to meet our long-term commitments to students while ensuring that organizations are meeting their outcome goals and increasing post-secondary completion rates for Oregon’s underrepresented students.

  
Kenneth Thrasher (Mar 20, 2023 08:47 PDT)

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# Ken Thrasher HB3120-2 Testimony

Final Audit Report

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