

March 20, 2023

Testimony in support of HB3120-2

Dear Chair Lively, Vice-Chair Ruiz and Vice-Chair McIntire and members of the committee,

As a current student in the College Possible Oregon program, I am writing to request your support of HB 3120-2. I am so grateful for the opportunity to show my support for College Possible. My name is Karyna Mishchenko and I am a current student at Portland State University. I'd like to share my story of how College Possible has been a true friend on this journey of pursuing higher education.

It all started during my Honor's Chemistry class, where two dedicated College Possible coaches gave a presentation on how college education makes a difference in your salary post-graduation. And although it's not a mystery why I remember that specific graphic, I was grateful for the resources my school had available for students like myself.

I am an immigrant from Ukraine. Coming to America in 2010, my family had insufficient knowledge of English, but we were given a lot of opportunities to get educated. My parents were the first ones to attend a local community college to learn the language, and a few years later, my older brother. He was the first one to have joined College Possible a few years before me. The outcome? He has now graduated from George Fox University, having obtained an Act Six full-ride scholarship. College Possible was the catalyst for this blessing, and my whole family is grateful, especially knowing that my parents had no way of paying for our education.

I have also greatly benefited from this program. During junior year in high school, our coaches taught us the tactics for taking the ACT exam, along with four ACT practice sessions fully sponsored by College Possible, with snacks and all. The practice SAT test I took before joining College Possible was a total fail, so I was super grateful to receive extensive preparation for the ACT. Then, senior year was all about applying to colleges and filling out scholarship applications. My coaches helped me with everything: from providing the list of possible scholarship and grant opportunities, notifying of deadlines, and revising my drafts. By graduation, I was ready to go to a college I felt great about and received three scholarships, one of which paid for the laptop I am using as I type.

I remember being encouraged by my coaches when I was having a hard time deciding on my field of study. Having many interests and skills, I didn't know what I wanted to focus on and pursue professionally. But I was not alone through the process and when I was ready with my choice of a degree in business, I was confident that Portland State was the right choice for me because their business program is ranked one of the best in the country.

Fast forward to my freshman year of college. When I had a burning question and needed counsel, I knew who I could turn to: my College Possible coach. Just knowing I always have support from people who know me closer than staff of my public school, is very comforting.

Furthermore, I have continual accountability in applying to scholarships and internships through monthly newsletters from my coach and semester check-in texts and calls. During a check-in call with my coach recently, I voiced my desire to get more involved with student groups and she sent me a follow up email with resources to guide my search. Additionally, because I built a relationship her, I was comfortable asking for a letter of recommendation for my scholarship application, for which I was very grateful. It is very comforting knowing I have support on all sides.

College Possible is a resource that leads this generation to so many opportunities. Thank you for showing interest in supporting this program.

Sincerely,

Karyna Mishchenko  
Current College Possible student  
Current Portland State University student