



### **OCCA Testimony on SB 262-2**

Chair Dembrow, members of the committee, for the record I'm John Wykoff, Deputy Director of the Oregon Community College Association representing Oregon's 17 community colleges. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you on SB 262-2.

Since its inception, the Oregon Promise has been intended to send the message that attending community college would be broadly affordable for all recent high school graduates or GED completers. It was built on the idea of being able to say, "free community college for all".

Over time the program has proven to be critical tool for students, especially those not receiving other forms of aid but who struggle to afford college. The Oregon Promise is "last dollar" financial aid program meaning that other state and federal financial aid awards are applied to the cost of tuition first. Because of this, a low income student receiving a full federal Pell Grant would receive only \$2000 per year through the Promise, while a high income student would receive more than twice that amount.

The -2 amendments address this issue with a \$100,000 per year income cap on students or families to be eligible for the Promise. We believe this helps address one of the regressive components of Oregon Promise but also hope to see the HECC have some flexibility in using the income level as a target with the ability to also look at a family's ability to pay, which is calculated as "Expected Family Contribution" for federal financial aid.

The dollars saved in the -2 amendments would then go to success and completion grants for students at community colleges. Here we would recommend the funding be treated like block grants to colleges for direct aid for students similar to the way federal relief funds were allocated during the pandemic. This will also ensure some predictability in funding for students and for financial aid offices.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today, and I'd be happy to answer any questions.