

Good afternoon Co-Chair Senator Elizabeth Steiner, Co-Chair Tawna Sanchez, and the members of the joint committee on Ways and Means. My name is Summer Baber, and I am academic adviser for TRIO Student Support Services.

I want to provide testimony supporting HB3120-5, which Appropriates \$5,000,000 to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission for allocation to expand the scope and community reach of college access and success programs through a competitive grant process.

In the last biennium budget, HB 5006 invested \$5,000,000 in funding for five college access programs in Oregon. I would like to speak today on the impact those funds have had on the Oregon TRIO Association, which was the recipient of that funding, and convince you to support this continued program into the next biennium.

TRIO programs represent over \$16 million in annual funding from the Department of Education to work with over 11,000 low-income and first-generation students across the state annually ranging from middle school students through adult learners. We ensure that the students who receive Oregon Opportunity grants, Oregon Promise funding, and Tribal grant funds complete their education. We work with students to promote FAFSA completion and provide wrap-around services to those who need it most. The last biennium was the first investment of its kind in the nation where a state has invested in the efforts of TRIO programs to serve underrepresented students in higher education their state. The purpose of those funds was multifaceted but centered around one idea: serve more students.

Over the past two years, the recipient of the state funding (a non-profit, Oregon TRIO Association, which is not funded through federal dollars) worked on adding nine (9) new TRIO grants to the state. This outcome will result in nearly \$2.5 million in annual funding from the federal budget, over 1,000 new students served annually, and over 20 new jobs across the state. Additionally, state funds were utilized to support current program operations, create state-wide student events, provide scholarships to those no longer eligible for pell grant funding to finish their degree, and support study abroad educational opportunities.

Continued investment in community-based organizations through HB3120-5 will uniquely address the needs of underrepresented students throughout Oregon. The Oregon TRIO Association has demonstrated a remarkable return on investment that can help maintain the effective management and constant expansion of TRIO programs throughout the state. TRIO is impactful at serving underrepresented students in Oregon; let's work together to increase the number of students who benefit from these services.

I invite you to approve HB 3120-5 in the FY23-25 Budget.

Sincerely,

Summer Baber