

Submitter: Laura Jessup  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means  
Measure: SB5506

Chair Steiner, Chair Sanchez, Vice-Chairs, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Laura Jessup and I am an instructor at Southern Oregon University. I am testifying today in support of \$1.05 billion appropriation for higher education in Oregon, and importantly the \$15 million dollar support fund for Oregon's Regional Universities and requested in the Governor's Budget.

Southern Oregon University (SOU) works to provide essential opportunities to our region and our rural communities. Many of my students are first-generation college students — the first in their families to attend college. They attend SOU to build careers and serve their community, for example as teachers, business entrepreneurs, social workers, artists, counselors, and healthcare professionals.

Unfortunately, Oregon's Regional Universities are suffering from detrimental funding shortfalls, leading to further deep cuts to faculty and staff positions. These cuts threaten program offerings and weaken our institutions. Students have less support and fewer opportunities when administrators cut faculty and staff positions and fail to invest in programs and services.

Already, the budget crisis has jeopardized programs and reduced faculty and advisors. To support students and promote their success toward graduation, we need secure budgets that allow us to rely on one another and plan effectively for the future.

With additional funding, we can secure faculty and frontline service jobs at our institutions, increase service levels that promote student success, and promote sustainable growth for our institutions. Our students' success depends on strong funding right now, not on a rainy-day fund.

Faculty at my institution, alongside fellow regional universities (EOU/OIT/SOU/WOU) are united in our commitment to Oregon's future. I urgently ask that Oregon commit \$15 million dollars to support our Regional Universities.

Laura Jessup  
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