

Submitter: Jack Nunn
On Behalf Of: UO
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure: SB5506

Co-chairs Steiner and Sanchez and members of the committee,

My name is Jack Nunn and I have been a part of the business community for more than 40 years. I am writing in support of higher education funding because I know how important an educated workforce is. I understand budget restrictions and tough decisions, but I encourage you to support Oregon's students through generous investments in public higher education, including funding the Public University Support Fund (PUSF) at \$1.05 billion and increasing the Oregon Opportunity Grant (OOG) by \$200 million. This is essential in order to just keep funding programs and services at the current level.

It was not a big challenge for me to attend college with just a little bit of help from my folks. I recognize not everyone has that opportunity now. I know that housing and food costs are much higher than they were when I was a young man and that young people these days are having a much harder time competing in the job market. Oregon's businesses need educated workers, who can afford to live near their jobs. We MUST ensure that higher education is more attainable for every student - including those without the financial means to pay for college on their own.

Oregon ranks 45th in the country for per-student, state funding of public universities and invests less than half the national average in financial aid per public university student. This is an embarrassing statistic. Adequate funding for Oregon's public universities creates opportunities for all Oregon students, and it is critical that the connection between state funding and availability of a higher education is recognized and respected.

Oregon is facing critical workforce shortages now. To address these shortages, the state must prioritize creating a highly skilled workforce to support essential industries. Oregon's public universities are attempting to respond to industry needs despite limited state resources, creating a diverse pipeline of highly skilled workers to power our economy. That becomes much more of a challenge without state support or support from businesses for work xxx

Thank you for your service to our state and thank you for supporting Oregon's students.