

Submitter: Tina Ontiveros

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Education

Measure: HB5025

Hello, Co-Chair Frederick, Co-Chair McLain and members of the committee.

My name is Tina Ontiveros and I am a writing teacher at Columbia Gorge Community College. Thank you for taking the time to read my support of increased funding for Oregon community colleges.

As you know, community colleges play a vital role in our state's economy by providing affordable education and training for students to enter the workforce or transfer to four-year institutions. However, the rising costs of providing quality education and services have put a strain on our colleges' budgets, especially during the pandemic. In particular, I am concerned about the impacts for marginalized and minoritized students. I grew up below the poverty line and was the first person in my family to go to college. Our low income families need funded community colleges.

We are here today to request that the legislature provide ongoing funding of \$855 million and one-time funding of \$50 million for the 2023-2025 biennium to help community colleges continue to maintain their core services and programs. This funding increase will help our colleges cover the rising costs of salaries, benefits, and operations, while continuing to provide high-quality education and workforce training to our communities as enrollment continues to increase.

Additionally, we are requesting the one-time funding to help our colleges transition away from COVID federal relief funds and towards a new equity and outcome-based distribution model. This model will ensure that funding is distributed based on student outcomes and will help us to close the equity gap for our underrepresented students.

Without this additional funding, our colleges will be forced to make difficult decisions that will negatively impact our students, such as reducing course offerings, increasing tuition, and cutting support services. This would be a disservice to our students and our communities, and it would hinder our state's economic growth.

In conclusion, I urge you to support increased funding for Oregon community colleges at \$855 million in ongoing funding and \$50 million in one-time funding for the 2023-2025 biennium. Thank you for your time and consideration.