

My name is Erica Battles, I attend Portland Community College and serve as a Student Senator. The degree I am pursuing is the Associates of Science Transfer Degree. I am currently co-enrolled at Portland State University perusing a Bachelors in Business Administration; Human Resources; and Commercial Project Management. As an older returning African American student, I have faced many barriers and obstacles in life while navigating a college career. I am writing in support of Bill 3121, Bill 3089, and the Oregon Opportunity Grant. As a fulltime student, it is important to address the entire student and offer support to truly make attending college possible.

The main barrier I have faced is simply lack of financial resources. The affordability of text books, required fees that accompany tuition, and the cost to attend college as a whole. This includes the financial obligations required to live. Ultimately, this creates an intense financial pressure to juggle school and life obligations. Offering grant subsidies, food support, affordable textbooks, and other resources through college allows attending college possible.

I had to make a choice between attending college full time while holding a part time job, or work full time and not pursue my dream of earning a degree. After serious consideration, I choose to make adjustments to pursue a degree. I decided to lessen my hours at work, enroll in school full time, and take a work study job on campus to offset expenses. Working part time was crucial for me, as a set fulltime work schedule would not allow the flexibility needed to take the necessary classes for my degree. Working less hours means less wages earned, this led to me ultimately having to make major changes in my lifestyle. While I'm working less at a job for compensation, I am not in fact working less. (Anyone who has taken a college course knows how much work it is.) Consequently, I have more work, more responsibilities, and less income. All that considered, I decided it was worth it.

With the resources PCC offers to students, this allowed me to survive. Without the food pantry, Oregon Opportunity Grant, Emergency Grant, affordable textbooks, I would not be able to continue pursuing my degree. I am walking proof that these programs are essential and effective. As more student become aware of such resources, this will ensure more students are able to peruse their college dreams. I ask that you take my testimony as proof of how essential it is to support Bill 3121, Bill 3089, and the Oregon Opportunity Grant.

Thank you for your time,

Erica Battles