

Good afternoon, Chair Rep Lively and the members of the House Committee On Higher Education. I am Matt Bisek, the Executive Director of the Oregon TRIO Association.

I want to provide testimony supporting HB 4163, which requires the Higher Education Coordinating Commission to establish a grant program to support organizations in expanding the scope and community reach of college access and success programs.

Over the last two biennium budgets, the Oregon legislature has committed to funding community-based organizations working with underrepresented populations to promote college access and completion. The Oregon TRIO Association has been a recipient of that funding since 2021. This is the first investment of its kind in the nation where a state has invested in the efforts of TRIO programs to serve low-income and first-generation students in higher education. The purpose of those funds was multifaceted but centered around one idea: serve more students.

The impact of TRIO programs centers on our effectiveness at providing wrap-around services to underrepresented students. However, scaling TRIO services is complex as the U.S. Department of Education funds each program in highly competitive 5-year grant cycles. The Oregon TRIO Association has spent the last three years expanding these services to new communities and working with institutions and community organizations to increase the number of grants statewide and serve additional students. As a result, we have added ten (10) new TRIO grants to the state. This outcome will result in over \$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. In the coming years, we will continue to expand TRIO programs during the subsequent competition cycles and hope to see our total programs increase by another double-digit number.

A grant program to continue the investment in community-based organizations through HB 4163 will uniquely address the needs of underrepresented students in higher education throughout Oregon. This program will also provide a more equitable process for organizations like Oregon TRIO to seek funding and create standard metrics the state can use to measure these grants' impact. TRIO programs represent a sustainable means to provide high-quality services that can transform communities and invest millions of additional federal dollars into our local communities to support these efforts.

I invite you to approve HB 4163.

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