

## Personal Testimony for House Higher Education Committee Meeting

Chair Lively, Vice Chair Ruiz, Vice Chair McIntire, and members of the House Higher Education Committee,

Hello again! For the record, my name is Javi Estrada, and I am the Student Body President at Mt Hood Community College. I am here today in support of HB 4162: The Student Emergency Needs Package.

Last month, I testified in person about the financial support that I have received from the Student Basic Needs department here at MHCC, when I was undergoing a housing crisis in the spring of 2022. I am here to testify that the Student Basic Needs department has helped me, yet again, in my time of need.

I currently work 20 hours per week as Student Body President as well as 15 hours on the weekend as a Fedex Ground Package Handler. I am also currently enrolled in 14 credit hours: Chamber Choir, Chemistry, Psychology, and Statistics. Last month, my income, my academics, and my mental health was negatively impacted by the ice storm and severe icy road conditions that we experienced during week 2 and 3 of the academic term. I was panicking, because I did not earn enough income in the month of January to cover the cost of rent, bills, groceries, and food for my emotional support pets in the month of February.

Thankfully, the Student Basic Needs Coordinator John Sheehan sent an email to students here on campus, stating that his office had Emergency Funding available for students who needed financial assistance. I applied on Monday. And as of 11 o'clock this morning, [Thursday, February 8, 2024] my application was approved, and I received the necessary funding to help pay for rent, bills, and food in the month of February.

I am sitting here in the student government office, feeling incredibly grateful and relieved. I am one of many students who have received support from the Student Basic Needs department. Students here on campus receive support in many ways thanks to funding granted to the Student Basic Needs department, from loaner laptops to wifi hotspots, bus cards and gas cards, food and drinks via Barney's Food Pantry for those who are experiencing food insecurity, referrals to the career planning and counseling center for those who are experiencing mental health strain, and of course, emergency funding for students who are experiencing financial hardship.

Because of the help that we the students of Mt Hood Community College have received, we are able to overcome real-life barriers, continue our academic journey, and succeed by making it to the finish line. It is my firm belief that investing in students means investing in the future economy of the great state of Oregon. It is my life goal to work in healthcare as a surgeon, saving lives and bringing patients back to good health. Please help students like me reach our goals, so that we can in turn become contributing members of society. Thank you for your time, and I hope we can count on you to support HB 4162: the Student Emergency Needs Package.