

Chair Hudson, Vice Chairs Fragala and Harbick, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Heather Blicher, and I am an advocate with Open Education Global (OEGlobal), a nonprofit dedicated to making higher education affordable for all. I strongly support HB 3182 and HB 3183, the Student Basic Needs and Workforce Stabilization Act.

As a former community college faculty member, I have seen firsthand how food insecurity, housing instability, and rising textbook costs impact students. Many work multiple jobs, skip meals, or live in shelters to afford an education.

OEGlobal believes every student deserves access to high-quality learning by removing barriers, particularly for underserved students.

The Student Basic Needs and Workforce Stabilization Act will help by:

- Providing Benefit Navigators with program budgets to connect students to housing, food assistance, and other essential resources.
- Expanding affordable student housing, so no one has to choose between rent and education.
- Investing in textbook affordability by supporting Open Educational Resources (OER), reducing financial burdens on students.

Oregon students cannot wait any longer for action. If we value equity and opportunity in higher education, we must ensure no student is left behind due to financial hardship. I urge you to pass HB 3182 and HB 3183—because education should be about learning, not surviving.

Thank you for your time and leadership on this critical issue.

Heather Blicher

Director, Community College Consortium for OER

Open Education Global

heather@oeglobal.org