



Statement from Fiona Sherwood, ASUO Director of Basic Needs

Chair Huson, Vice Chair Fragala and Harbick, and members of the committee,

My name is Fiona Sherwood, and I serve as the Director of Basic Needs for the Associated Students of the University of Oregon (ASUO). I am writing to express strong support for **HB 3182 and HB 3183: The Student Basic Needs and Workforce Stabilization Act**. These bills are critical investments in student basic needs programs, affordable student housing, and textbook affordability.

Across Oregon, college students are facing increasing barriers to success—not because they lack the motivation to learn, but because they lack the resources to meet their basic needs. **The 2023 HOPE Basic Needs Survey** found that **57% of students experienced food insecurity, housing insecurity, or homelessness**. This is unacceptable. **When students worry about where their next meal is coming from, whether they can afford their rent, or if they will have to skip purchasing a textbook, their education suffers.**

At the University of Oregon, there are far too many students who have had to choose between **paying tuition and affording groceries**, students who have slept in their cars, and students who have dropped out entirely because they simply couldn't afford to stay in school. **We cannot continue to ask students to invest in their education while failing to invest in them.**

The Student Basic Needs and Workforce Stabilization Act directly addresses these challenges by:

- Expanding **Benefits Navigators**, who connect students to food, housing, and emergency resources.
- **Investing in affordable housing solutions** and launching a **Student Housing Task Force** to create long-term solutions.
- Providing funding for **Open Educational Resources** to lower textbook costs, so students don't have to choose between buying a book or paying for rent.

These bills are not just about supporting students today; they are an investment in Oregon's future. **When students can meet their basic needs, they graduate. When they graduate, they contribute to our economy, our workforce, and our communities.** I urge you to support **HB 3182 and HB 3183** and ensure that every student in Oregon has the opportunity to succeed.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best,

Fiona Sherwood

ASUO Director of Basic Needs