

To: Senate Committee on Education
From: CM Hall, Newport
Re: Support for SB604 - Strong Start Grant

Greetings, Senators! Thank you for taking the time to read my remarks.

My name is CM Hall and I'm a Newport resident and graduate of Western Oregon University. I have also worked and taught at Western for nearly 20 years and wanted to share my most fervent recommendation for funding the Strong Start Grant.

Western Oregon University welcomes a high percentage of students who are First Generation. Without the Strong Start program, students arrive at college unfamiliar with the rigors of higher education and the Strong Start program helps prepare students early and gives them a greater chance for success from the jump. The statistics bear this out - the students who are a part of this program have higher retention rates and are more resourceful at seeking services for support when they need it and **graduating**. The folks who run this program have compelling statistics that show the impact and difference and it's stark and underscores the value of this funding and early intervention.

I ask you to please approve funding for this critical and time-sensitive work to give our Oregon young adults the best chance at academic success in higher education.

Thank you.