

Feb. 23, 2025

Chair Hudson, Vice Chairs Fragala and Harbick, and members of the committee,

My name is Chloe Eberhardt, and I work at a national anti-hunger non-profit where my work focuses on increasing access to federal nutrition programs like SNAP to ensure individuals and families have the resources and support they need to thrive. I also formerly worked at Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon and I was part of the original HB 2835 coalition that established benefit navigators at all Oregon community colleges and universities. I am writing in support of HB 3182 and HB 3183: The Student Basic Needs and Workforce Stabilization Act, which will make important investments in student basic needs initiatives, affordable student housing initiatives, and textbook affordability.

I had the privilege of working on the original HB 2835 alongside college students who championed the support that benefit navigators would provide to ensure equitable access to higher education. Being part of the coalition that championed the passage of the original HB 2835 is work that I am deeply proud of and I am reaching out to ensure the continued system of support for college students in Oregon.

Public benefits and financial aid provide critical assistance so students can focus on their education, but it's hard to access these resources. As someone who has received SNAP and helped many people navigate the SNAP process, it is challenging to complete the paperwork, conduct the interview, and then maintain benefits. Doing this for multiple programs that provide food, housing, healthcare, utilities, and financial aid requires knowing and navigating many different processes and complicated eligibility. Having a trained navigator supporting students through a variety of processes to receive critical benefits reduces confusion and stress, leading to more successful outcomes and ultimately students having the resources they need to succeed in college.

Supporting a student with basic needs, affordable textbooks, and affordable housing means it's more likely that this student will be able to remain in college and complete their education. Higher education is important for future success, but it's expensive and challenging to go through without taking on debt. HB 3182 and HB 3183 are important measures that allow students to get the support they need to remain in college and lower their financial burden, which ultimately contributes to our future economy and workforce.

Thank you for your time, and I hope that I can count on your support of HB 3182 and HB 3183: The Student Basic Needs and Workforce Stabilization Act. Students cannot wait any longer!

Chloe Eberhardt