

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

My name is Zara Pastos and I am a faculty member in the Adult Basic and Secondary Education (ABSE) program at Lane Community College. 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.

Most of the students that I teach in the ABSE program experience life barriers that make it challenging for them to come to school many days, including food, housing, childcare and transportation issues. One particular student that I will always remember working with lived in his car during the pandemic and would Zoom into class on his phone from his car whenever he had power to do so. He was a very bright, insightful student with clear career goals, but he stopped attending class one day. When he was finally able to respond to one of my attempts to reach out to him, he told me that his car had broken down and it was in the middle of winter. Through the support of our basics needs navigator at LCC, Rebecca, we were able to get this student an emergency fund to fix his car. This helped him get stabilized enough to give him transportation to get to a new job and continue attending school.

You are probably familiar with Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Simply put, if a student does not have the basic necessities such as food, water, shelter and security, they do not have the capacity to function creatively and academically at school until those needs are met. Investing in student basic needs is a critical investment in Oregon's future so that we can have functioning citizens in the workplace who are housed, healthy, can raise healthy families and give back to the community.

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!

Sincerely,

Zara Pastos, ABSE Faculty

Lane Community College