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STATE REPRESENTATIVE
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Joint Committee on Ways & Means
Co-Chair, Public Safety Subcommittee, Joint Committee on Ways & Means
Joint Transportation Committee
House Committee on Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

March 11, 2025

The Honorable Zach Hudson, State Representative
House Committee on Higher Education and Workforce Development
Oregon State Capitol

Chair Hudson:

Thank you for hearing House Bill 2458 (HB 2458). I apologize for missing the public testimony this morning. I was co-chairing the Public Safety Subcommittee of the Joint Ways & Means Committee and could not depart to offer in-person testimony. I hope this letter explains my support.

HB 2458 is an important and timely proposal for consideration. It would offer us a new tool for better understanding our situation “in-real-time.” At its core, it provides us with a required assessment of what we are doing, why, and for what intended outcomes. It will help us reduce confusion, duplication, and waste. It could even yield awareness of resources that could be more effectively used on student programming.

The purpose of HB 2458 is simple: conduct an evaluation of all the things we ask the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) to report upon (and all things public universities are required to report to HECC) on and make recommendations. These recommendations may be to continue “as is,” to combine specific tasks, and/or to eliminate requirements that are outdated or obsolete. The measure is straightforward and focused. This is necessary because we have added mandates over the past twelve (12) years and likely have little to no idea of the full scale of that workload.

Given the uncertainties of this moment, we must know how every dollar is spent – and how it is used for optimum – impact. Over the past eleven (11) years the number of employees at HECC have increased from roughly forty (40) to over one hundred eighty-five (185). The size of the HECC workforce is starting to rival that of its predecessors the Oregon University System and the earlier Oregon State System of Higher Education. Ironically, the more work assigned to HECC the less direction it demonstrates in controlling the competitive instincts of the public universities.

We need to know more about what we are expecting of the HECC. This will yield significant insight into the organizational structure and the down-range impacts upon the public universities and groups dependent upon the HECC. I believe we need dramatic reform of the HECC and governance procedures for our public universities. However, none of that is possible absent the data this study will provide us.

In conclusion, I want to emphasize my gratitude for your interest in this measure. Thank you again for holding a hearing on it today. Please let me know if you have questions or require additional information. Thank you for your attention.

Respectfully,

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