

To: 2025 Joint Committee on Ways and Means

Please prioritize protecting Oregonians and our immediate needs in your state budget, to reject any new tax breaks for the wealthy or for corporations, and to stand strong against the slash and burn tactics that Elon Musk is taking to our country

I have been a history teacher at Oregon Coast Community College and a member of AFT - Oregon Coast United Employees, Local 6020, for almost two decades. During that time, our college built a new campus, started an Aquarium Sciences program integrated with the Newport Aquarium, and has become a key pathway to success for students on the mid-coast. Our college provides educational opportunities for future scientists, healthcare workers, and university graduates and is an economic driver in the community.

To maintain vital education and training programs, community colleges need an additional \$120 million for the 2025-27 biennium – a 15.7 percent increase over the 2023-2025 biennium.

Our students need and deserve the support of the state legislature. Oregon community colleges are open access to all regardless of level of education. The average age of a community college student is 26, with 52 percent of community college students over the age of 25. Community colleges are the most affordable option for students whether transferring to a 4-year university or seeking career and technical education and training. Without sufficient state support, community colleges cannot keep tuition increases to a minimum without cutting programs or critical student support services.

That is why I urge you to invest in our community colleges and invest in our students and to please prioritize a state budget which protects Oregonians rather than adding to the chaos.

Thank you,

James Jackson