

Submitter: Alejandro Guzman Leon
On Behalf Of: Mt. Hood Community College
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5006

Good afternoon, Co-Chairs and Members of the Committee. My name is Alejandro Guzman Leon and I am a student at Mt. Hood Community College, I never thought I would be here today—testifying in front of you, let alone pursuing a college degree.

For most of my life, I didn't see college as an option. Whether it was the cost, family responsibilities, or just not knowing how to start, higher education felt out of reach. But when I found Mt. Hood Community College, everything changed. It was affordable, accessible, and full of people who believed in me—even before I believed in myself.

At Mt. Hood Community College, I'm studying Physical Therapy program, This program has given me hands-on training, real-world experience, and the confidence to build a career in out in our community. I'm not just earning a degree—I'm preparing for a family-wage job that will allow me to contribute to my community.

But I couldn't have done this alone. Like many students, I've faced challenges outside the classroom. Like struggling to pay my tuition having to decide weather I pay my education or have food on the table or household bills. Without the support services at my college, I might not have made it this far. These services are lifelines, and they're in higher demand than ever.

That's why I'm here today—to ask you to invest in students like me. Without sufficient funding, colleges may have to raise tuition or cut programs, making it even harder for students to succeed. I know firsthand what a difference community college can make. It opened a door that I thought was closed.

I ask you to fully fund the Community College Support Fund at \$920 million. This investment doesn't just help students—it strengthens Oregon's workforce, communities, and economy.

Thank you for your time and for believing in the power of education, and remember that community colleges WORK for Oregon.