

Submitter: Thuy Tran

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Higher Education and Workforce Development

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3920

Dear Chair Hudson, Vice Chair Harbick, Vice Chair Fragala, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Rep. Thuy Tran, and I have the honor of representing House District 45, which covers Northeast and Southeast Portland.

As both an optometrist and a member of the Oregon Air National Guard, I have personally witnessed the transformative power of education and its ability to open opportunities and strengthen communities. HB 3920 honors the service and sacrifices made by Oregon's veterans and their families, removing barriers, and empowering the children of disabled or deceased service members to access higher education and advanced career opportunities. It was my education that allowed me to build wealth, and it is well-known that the children of disabled veterans often face additional cost barriers in their access of higher education.

I strongly support HB 3920, an important technical update that aligns Oregon's Veterans Dependent Tuition Waiver Program with recent federal updates to the Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance (Chapter 35). HB 3920 raises the age limit for the existing waiver from 23 to 31 years for the children of 100% disabled veterans. Congress, by removing the age limits on the Chapter 35 program, recognized delays in processing, and recognized that children pursue education at different paces – HB 3920 aligns Oregon's waiver with these federal changes.

I support other proposals that would change this program to operate on a "first-dollar" basis, like Representative Wright's bill HB 3534. ("First-dollar" means that the tuition waiver would apply first, before any other financial aid, fully covering tuition upfront, allowing students to use other financial aid for additional costs like housing or books.)

However, the purpose of HB 3920 is specifically to change the age limit for participation in the program. To be clear, HB 3920 does not switch the program to a "first-dollar" approach. Instead, it keeps the current policy, a "last-dollar" approach where universities can choose whether to subtract the amount of other financial aid a student receives from their tuition waiver. Thus there is no significant impact to the state and its self-governed universities.

I support both Representative Wright's HB 3534 (which uses a first-dollar approach) and my own HB 3920 (which adjusts only the age limit). The cost impact for HB 3920 should be minimal when compared to other concepts, and I support both pieces of

legislation as separate tracks, and hope both become laws.

In addition to raising the age limit, it also updates the law to clarify that a student may receive a masters degree waiver, regardless of if they received the waiver for their baccalaureate studies. This reduces confusion and aligns with the original intent of the program.

Supporting HB 3920 will significantly benefit not only our military-connected families but also our broader community by enhancing workforce readiness and strengthening Oregon's economic future.

Please join in me supporting HB 3920.

Thank you for your consideration.