

To: Co-Chairs Ruiz and Sollman, and members of the Ways & Means Subcommittee on Education:

My name is Bennett Gilbert. I am an Adjunct Assistant Professor of History and Philosophy at Portland State University. I am writing today to speak in support of the following:

The Public University Support Fund (PUSF)

The Community College Support Fund (CCSF)

The Oregon Opportunity Grant (OOG)

HB 3357: Community College Part-Time Faculty Pay Parity

HB 3182 / HB 3183: Student Basic Needs Package

I am 72 years old. I returned to academia late in life, after other pursuits, because more than anything else in life I wanted to teach and to research. I came poor and did not expect wealth, but I came because it was and is my strongest passion. It is a way of caring for others, my community, and our world. I've taught well, and in just a decade I have published more than two dozen peer-reviewed papers and four books; my fifth is now under way.

The increasing impoverishment of PSU has pushed me onto Unemployment Insurance three times during the last five years. The University cannot offer any hope for advancement. For the last year I have been fighting for my job against the financial and other pressures PSU and my departments in particular are under. This has left me deeply stressed, as I have to scrounge to stay housed and fed, despite my age, skills, and accomplishments.

This is a sad state of things not only for me but for Oregon. The state university system is losing or wasting large amounts of talent in teaching and scholarship. This talent is not expensive. Few scholars expect riches: they will work for modest salaries out of love for their students and their fields.

Higher education is the most productive investment this State can make for the common good. It is as close to a certainty in advancing the public well-being as anything can be.

Please generously fund our students, faculty, and infrastructure.

Bennett Gilbert