

Submitter: Carrie Sandberg

Committee: Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education

RE: Support for SB 5525 – Oregon Community College Funding

Dear Co-Chair Sollman, Co-Chair Ruiz, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Carrie Sandberg and I serve as the Financial Aid Director at Clackamas Community College (CCC). I am writing to express strong support for Senate Bill 5525, which proposes \$920 million in funding for Oregon's 17 community colleges in the 2025-27 biennium.

Community colleges are Oregon's most affordable entry point to post-secondary education and career training. Our programs are tailored to meet the needs of our community, providing pathways to family-wage careers and addressing critical workforce demands.

Enrollment at Oregon's community colleges has increased by 7.5% over the last academic year, with the fastest growth in Career and Technical Education (CTE) degrees and short-term career certificates. These programs, while essential, are also among the most expensive to offer due to the need for specialized equipment and hands-on training. For instance, our nursing program requires significant investment to maintain high-quality instruction and meet accreditation standards.

Additionally, the demand for student support services such as child care, food, housing assistance, and other wraparound services has increased drastically over the past five years. At CCC, we are committed to providing these essential services to ensure student success, but without sufficient state support, we risk having to cut programs or critical support services.

I choose to work at CCC so I can serve students and assist them with obtaining resources that help them receive their degree. Having help with childcare, food, and housing impacts students' ability to attend classes. Many students I see are in need of these basic resources.

We are nimble, innovative, and deeply connected to the communities we serve. But we can only continue this work with a sustainable and equitable level of state investment.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to Oregon's students. I urge you to support SB 5525 and fully fund community colleges at \$920 million for the next biennium.

Sincerely,
Carrie Sandberg

Financial Aid Director
Clackamas Community College