

**Date: April 29, 2025**

Chair Lieber, Chair Sanchez, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Hollie Oakes-Miller, and I serve as Vice President of Political Action for the American Federation of Teachers - Oregon (AFT-Oregon), representing over 18,000 higher education workers across the state. I'm also a part-time faculty member at Portland Community College. I'm here today on behalf of our members to urge you to fully fund Oregon's community colleges and to support a state budget rooted in equity, responsibility, and long-term investment in our communities.

Community colleges are one of Oregon's greatest tools for economic mobility. As the most affordable and accessible entry point to higher education, they serve a wide range of students, including working adults, first-generation college-goers, and those historically underserved by our education system. The average age of a community college student is 26, and more than half are over the age of 25. These students are juggling jobs, families, and financial pressures — and they need a fully funded system to succeed.

We are asking you to increase the Community College Support Fund by \$120 million, bringing the total to \$920 million. This funding is essential to prevent layoffs, ensure job security for faculty and staff, and maintain the quality of instruction and support services that students rely on to stay enrolled and graduate. It would also allow institutions to invest in mental health counseling, academic advising, and career services — supports that are no longer optional in today's world but essential to student success. The demand for services like childcare, housing assistance, and food security has only grown in recent years, and our colleges must be equipped to meet it.

We also urge your support for HB 2669, which addresses a longstanding injustice in our education system: the lack of pay parity for part-time faculty. While institutions have become increasingly reliant on contingent educators, these faculty are paid significantly less on a per-course basis than their full-time colleagues. This is not just a labor issue — it is a student success issue. Research shows that student outcomes improve when they are taught and mentored by educators who have long-term relationships with their institutions. Pay parity will allow part-time faculty to build sustainable careers, which in turn creates a more stable, inclusive, and supportive learning environment for students.

This legislature has an opportunity to make a meaningful investment in Oregon's future — one that values students, respects educators, and strengthens our communities. I urge you to meet the moment.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to public education.

Sincerely,

Hollie Oakes-Miller  
VP of Political Action  
AFT-Oregon