

Good day. Thank you co-chairs Sollman, Ruiz, and members of the joint sub-committee on education.

I am here to here to voice my support of Senate Bill 5525. Providing full funding of Oregon College's with \$920 million dollars.

Hello, my name is Lucille Begay. I am a lifelong resident of Celilo Village. A tribal member of the Yakama Nation as well as the Navajo Nation.

I am a current student and also serve as a Board Director for Columbia Gorge Community College, representing Wasco County.

Today, I share my story with you of my GED journey. I attended high school in The Dalles in the 1990's. I struggled all through 9th to 12th grade academically. Feeling as I did not get the support I needed to stay on track. I continued to fall behind and my grades were not so good as well. By the time I was a Senior, my GPA and graduation requirements were not at expectations, which kept me from graduating. I guess you can say I gave up on myself and never returned to high school.

As time went on, both of my parent's have become ill with different health issues. With me being the youngest of my siblings, I took on the role to be a caregiver to my parents full-time. My mother had kidney failure which then she had to be on dialysis. I was her driver for that and her appointments to Portland. Then my father retired from the railroad and developed lung problems which led him to be on oxygen daily from lung disease. Soon after as years passed, he became blind from glaucoma. So, from there, I made the choice to take on the responsibility for both parents. Because they took care of me all through my years. Why not return the favor.

Through all of this, I worked part time at Safeway. Because I had finances to pay on my end. It was hard to balance this, but I managed it all. I have always been a strong person to believe in God. I prayed and asked God to be by my side.

Unfortunately, my parents both passed away, 8 years apart. After their passing I took time to myself to grieve. And I remember my parents would always remind me to go back to school. Finish what I

started. They encouraged how education was important/

Just recently within a few years ago, I made the choice to go back to school to get my GED at Columbia Gorge Community College. I made a promise to myself to stick with it and to persevere. I had tried to do classes in person, but it was not working out for me. Because financially I was struggling. So, I decided to do online classes on zoom which was a perfect fit. Since online classes, I have passed my MATH GED official. And next week I have my SOCIAL STUDIES GED official all scheduled. Which will leave me only one other test to do. I am doing all I can to accomplish this closing chapter for myself. It has been a long time coming. The teachers and staff at CGCC have all been wonderful and supportive.

Thank you for this time. I hope you recognize the importance of \$920 million to fully fund Oregon's Community College's.

Sincerely,

Lucille Begay

