



# American Association of University Professors

*Academic Freedom for a Free Society*

April 30, 2025

Joint Committee on Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Education  
Oregon State Capitol  
Salem, OR 97301

Re: SB 5525 - Support

Co-Chairs Sollman and Ruiz, and members of the Committee,

My name is Louisa Hooven, and I am a faculty member at Oregon State University. I serve as the grievance officer for my union, UAOSU. I am also AAUP Oregon's Vice President of Political Action.

Oregon's higher education institutions transform lives and provide the trained workforce needed to grow our state's economy. Oregon State University alone had an impact of approximately \$3.5 billion last year. The students we train and the research initiated by faculty build careers and new industries that are the engine of Oregon's progress. Higher education is an investment that pays off many fold for Oregonians, and I urge you to prioritize support for higher education in this budget.

Enabling students to connect with resources that increase access to higher education is critical, and thank you for restoring \$5 million to the benefits navigator. Now, I urge you to invest **\$450 million** in the **Oregon Opportunity Grant** to expand financial aid, **\$1.275 billion** in the **Public University Support Fund**, and **\$920 million** in the **Community College Support Fund** to keep tuition affordable. Additionally, **\$22 million** for the **Basic Needs Package** - House Bills 3182 & 3183 - will provide essential housing and food assistance to help students stay enrolled and graduate.

All of these asks are essential to support students and faculty, and I particularly want to focus on the Public University Support Fund, which is key to keeping our public universities affordable. The PUSF helps support faculty salaries, classrooms and libraries, research core facilities, academic advising, and everything else that is critical to student success and knowledge creation. To balance increasing costs and low state funding support, Oregon's tuition rates are among the highest in the West. Funding the PUSF at less than \$1.275 billion risks

shifting even more of the cost of higher education on to students. Please fund this request and help keep college tuition affordable.

Finally, there are many bills this session that leverage the vast expertise of the OSU's research faculty. **House Bills 2408, 2947, 3114, 3173, 3219, 3528** apply scientific expertise from our universities to address real-world, current issues, including "forever chemicals", water infrastructure and management, and supporting Extension and other essential programs. **House Bills 3011, 3129, and 3634** enable our higher education institutions to develop targeted areas of the workforce in mental health, water treatment, and childcare. These bills enable our universities to target Oregon-specific needs, and I urge you to support them.

Thank you for your hard work in this busy, busy session!

Sincerely,

Louisa A. Hooven, PhD  
VP of Political Action, AAUP Oregon