

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,

For the record, my name is Harold McNaron. I work in Portland State University's Office of Academic Innovation, where I serve as the Teaching, Learning and Engagement Associate, and I am a proud member of the American Association of University Professors' chapter here. On this International Workers' Day, I'm here to advocate for a \$275 million increase of the Public University Support fund and for \$22 million for the Student Basic Needs and Workforce Stabilization Act (HB 3182+3183).

I'm happy to share a few moments with you uplifting the workers of PSU, starting with our students. About half of PSU students work part-time. Another 25% or so work full-time while enrolled in classes. Some work on campus, yes, but many had jobs before they were PSU students and continue to work those jobs while completing their studies. Unlike other colleges and universities who cater to high-wealth elites with fancy facilities and events to occupy their students' ample free time, and I know from experience, as I've worked at some of those schools, the vast majority of PSU students are workers and working-class. PSU truly is the people's school - people who would benefit from the resources offered in the Basic Needs Act.

I'm here to advocate for increased funding for our students who work and also the workers at our community partner organizations. PSU's motto is: let knowledge serve the city. A primary way that happens at PSU is that our students, staff and faculty collaborate with and sustain partnerships with hundreds of local, regional and national nonprofits, k12 schools, healthcare systems, governmental agencies, small businesses and other groups. Often serving as co-educators while receiving \$0 from PSU, these community partners provide real-world educational and professional experiences for PSU students. Yet too many of these partnerships are on hiatus or ending due to PSU's austerity measures, such as those that increase class size and reduce our capacity to work with our partners (let alone meet the individual interests and needs of our students).

Alongside our students and our community partners, I'm here to advocate for PSU staff and faculty, of which I am one. Most of us come to work at PSU because we believe in the mission and the motto. We believe in the power of education to transform lives and

communities. Yet, too often we are underpaid and overworked. Too many colleagues struggle to meet their basic needs of food and housing. Despite these systemic challenges, PSU faculty and staff continue to support students' rise toward their educational, professional and personal goals. PSU is the peoples' school and social mobility is what we do. That's why I come here on International Workers' Day to ask you to increase funding and support of PSU students and other workers.

Sometimes at PSU we call ourselves scrappy. Plenty of us have life experience that's required us to fight and struggle, but I'm here to call for a new day when education - when community - when social mobility is adequately supported by the government we all share. A \$275 million increase to the Public University Support Fund and \$22 million for the Student Basic Needs and Workforce Stabilization Act would be an intentional move toward that goal. Thank you for your consideration + for your leadership in this budgeting process.

Thank you for your consideration,

Harold McNaron

Teaching, Learning and Engagement Associate at Portland State University