

Testimony to Education Subcommittee of Ways & Means  
Marcy 27, 2013

By Joey Parnell, Echocardiography Student at Oregon  
Institute of Technology

Good morning, Co-chairs Komp and Monroe, and members of the committee.

my name is Joey Parnell.

I am a student at Oregon Tech in the Medical Imaging/Echocardiography program. I want to tell you about my journey to almost having a great job in the healthcare field, and why your investment in Oregon's universities matters so much.

I grew up in Lewiston Idaho, with three sisters and one brother in a middle class family. My parents always supported me, but they could not support five kids in college, so it's been up to me to figure out how to pay for college. I went to Columbia Basin Community College where I played college volleyball. I was then recruited to Oregon Tech on a volleyball scholarship. I had never heard of Oregon Tech and did not know what I wanted to study. I played three years of volleyball at OIT on an athletic scholarship, which allowed college to be more affordable for me.

My first year at OIT I discovered echocardiography. I applied to the professional program, and was accepted. Now I am completing my senior year externship at Legacy Good Sam Hospital. I am so grateful I was able to find a career I love.

Besides my small sports scholarship, I was also granted WUE tuition rates, and some Pell grants. In order to pay for college, I worked two jobs and played a competitive sport. Now that I am on my externship, I am working three jobs (counting my full-time externship), and average 70 hours of work per week. I have an interview this week to see if Legacy will hire me permanently. My goal is to finish my degree, get a great job (hopefully at Legacy) and stay in Oregon. I have about \$15,000 in student loan debt, which is much lower than many of my friends. I am here because I want legislators to understand how hard it is to make it

through college and start a successful career. It's almost like young people now get degrees against all odds. I am asking you to make it easier for students to find their interests, study hard, get their degrees, and start contributing to their communities.

Help us help you by putting more money into higher ed and maintaining athletic scholarship funding, so we can do our part, but not do it all my ourselves.

Thank you.