

# THE OREGON IDEA

SUPPORTING STUDENTS, COMMUNITY COLLEGES, AND UNIVERSITIES TO BUILD A BETTER OREGON

April 3, 2013

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

JOINT WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

c/o Senator Rod Monroe and Representative Betty Komp, Co-Chairs

900 Court Street NE

Salem, OR 97301

Re: House Bill 5019 – Department of Community Colleges Budget

Dear Co-Chair Monroe and Co-Chair Komp and Committee Members:

As representatives of Oregon businesses, we urge your support for an appropriation of \$510 million for the state's Community College Support Fund for 2013-15.

We support your 40-40-20 goals for high school and college completion. Achieving these goals will provide the better-educated, higher-skilled workforce that our businesses need to succeed in an increasingly competitive, knowledge-based economy.

But this is not just about 2025. It is about today. Our businesses need the skills and abilities of a better-educated workforce now, when jobs continue to remain unfilled for lack of qualified candidates even in this period of high unemployment. Our community colleges are trying to respond to these challenges – by collaborating with local employers, doing more with less and resorting even to midnight classes to meet the demand for their courses. But they cannot keep pace with the demands of today's economy, much less make the progress demanded by our 40-40-20 goals, when they are forced to make do with declining state support for our students.

We take at their word the community college leaders who told you earlier this month that the level of funding proposed in the Co-Chairs budget will force higher tuition increases, fewer course offerings and longer waiting lists for students seeking associate degrees, transfers to the university system and post-secondary certificates. This is not a prescription for economic success in 2013 or 2025.

We ask you to consider the \$510 million for community colleges an investment whose value will be evident in opportunity, jobs and prosperity not only in the aspirational atmosphere of 2025 but in the real world and workforce of Oregon's 2013-15 economy.



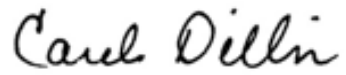
Bill Thorndike, President  
Medford Fabrication



John Porter, President/CEO  
AAA Oregon/Idaho



Charley Miller, President  
Miller Lumber Co.



Carol Dillin, Vice- President of Business Dev.  
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