



OREGON STATE SENATE

Chair Monroe, Chair Komp, members of the committee, for the record I'm Mark Hass, State Senator from Beaverton and Aloha.

I wish I was here today with the bill we aspired to a year ago.

But alas, the goal of a uniform, standardized system where every high school student can earn college credit while in high school is still a ways off.

It's a very popular concept—popular with parents, teachers and the educational community. Study after study shows it makes college more affordable and high school years more productive. Kids who earn college credits in high school are much more likely to graduate from college. But the details on assessments, logistics, and of course, money are not easy to assemble.

Oregon does an OK job of allowing some students to earn some college credits. But it's a different process in nearly every high school and every college. There's a perverse that we have to get around: high schools aren't always willing to give up their daily ADMW money from the state and colleges don't want to do something for nothing.

What we need is a de-militarized zone between the 11-14 grades.

So that gets us to the bill before you. It improves on what we have now...as we work our way up to the BIG STEP. Among other things it has a study to look at technical needs of accelerated college learning. This study will be headed up by Rudy Crew, Oregon's Chief Investment Officer.

It is important to note that dual credit courses aren't just helpful for high achieving students who would do well in college without any help from us. In fact, research has shown that these courses are particularly effective for lower-income students and for boys. These are the populations that we need to be targeting with our strategic investments and that is what Senate Bill 222 does.

Specifically, Senate Bill 222:

1. Appropriates \$3 million into a scholarship fund to help high school students pay for accelerated college credit programs. This will help students who might otherwise see college as unattainable and unaffordable get a foothold in and begin their college career without debt. For practical purposes this is money used by high school students to take college courses on their own.

2. It also appropriates \$5 million to the Department of Education to help design and implement consortiums that will create individualized, innovative and flexible ways of providing dual credit courses to high school students.
3. The bill directs community colleges to collaborate with local high schools to facilitate the delivery and expansion of accelerated college programs.

You will hear more about these budget items since they were parsed from the Governor's proposed budget to the legislature.

I think we all agree this is a critical area to explore if we're going to reach 40-40-20.

Getting more high school kids into – and out of – college is really my highest priority. I wish I had the elusive language in this bill to make it so.

But the technical changes necessary to do that will take more time. So thank you for your patience as we continue moving forward.