

Myself and my little brother are both in college right now. By next fall, so will my little sister. When we were growing up, our parents had no reason to imagine the tremendous hardship that securing a college education for their children would become. They both went to college, did well, and got good jobs, and yet - despite having done nothing wrong - it is now becoming harder and harder on them to provide their children with the same level of education that they were able to take for granted, having come of age only a generation ago when college tuition was exponentially more affordable. Over the three years I've attended Portland State, I've seen my tuition and student fees steadily climbing while the administration cuts our benefits, student programs, privatizes campus services and plays real estate speculator instead of educator, and as a result, I've been forced to rely on loans to stay in school. Luckily for me, I'm from Oregon. I have friends from out of state that, because of the current model of higher ed. funding in this country, are going into astronomical levels of debt. This is unacceptable - for both students and their families, as well as Oregonians. We are this state's future. If we have to spend all of our time worrying if we can stay in school, how our choice to stay in school will effect our parents (will they be unable to pay their mortgage? will they be foreclosed out of our childhood home?) then we will never get the most out of our education. Pay it Forward would provide security for students, their families, university workers and faculty and the State of Oregon - the state that I've grown up in; the state that I love. It pains me to see just how omnipresent these massive, massive levels of student debt are, and what they do to people.

Please, for Oregon, pursue Pay It Forward with the energy and seriousness that such a potentially life-changing piece of legislation deserves!

Cameron Frank  
Portland State University  
Senior English Major (on track to graduate with honors if I can afford to)