



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

**HB 3025 Next Generation Fund Legislation**  
**Co-Chief Sponsors: Rep. Gallegos and Rep. Gorsek**  
**House Committee on Higher Education and Workforce Development**  
**Public Hearing March 13, 2013 8:00 a.m., Hearing Room D**

Good morning Chair Dembrow and Members of the Committee. For the record, I'm Chris Gorsek, State Representative of House District 49, which includes the cities of Troutdale, Wood Village, Fairview and Gresham.

I'm glad to be here this morning to speak in support of House Bill 3025 which would help create a more stable funding mechanism for early childhood education programs and our higher education system.

As we all know, our education system in Oregon is not where it should be. Our high school graduation rate is one of the lowest in the nation and **the task of funding our universities is increasingly being put on the backs of our students.**

It's our responsibility to ensure that we are doing everything within our power to ensure that students here in Oregon are given an education that will prepare them for life after graduation.

**By establishing the Next Generation Fund we can take a step toward a stable funding system for early education programs and our universities.** Why is this program important?

First, research shows that early childhood education programs contribute significantly toward success in school. Students who take part in early childhood education programs are more likely to complete four-year degrees, hold higher paying jobs and have more stable lives as adults. Reynolds High, which is in my district, has one of the lowest graduation rates in Oregon. Providing early childhood education programs to students in the Reynolds School District would set them on a path for success and help us reach our 40-40-20 goals.

Second, as a professor at Mt. Hood Community College, I see first-hand the impact of the lack of education funding for our universities. Since the beginning of the recession, college enrollment has jumped over 30 percent while state funding has dropped by 20 percent. From 2007 to 2012, Oregon experienced the 10<sup>th</sup> largest drop in per-student public support, a 32% decrease. Only four states provided less public support per student. Tuition in Oregon is about 20% above the national average while student assistance efforts have lagged behind the national average by 20%. Needless to say, our higher education system is in need of stable and increased funding.

While this bill will not solve all of our problems, **it can help us provide the opportunities that students throughout Oregon deserve.** Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify today.

