



February 5, 2014

The Honorable Chris Harker
House Committee on Higher Education and Workforce Development
900 Court St. NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: HB 4116 Relating to the assistance for community college students

Dear Chair Harker and Members of the House Committee on Higher Education and Workforce Development:

I am writing in support of HB 4116, a bill which I believe supports a vitally important opportunity to increase college attendance and success among historically under-educated communities.

My interest in this bill derives from the prior success in Portland, and extremely promising early results in Beaverton, of the Portland Community College Future Connect program. Beaverton dedicated \$100,000 of general fund monies, matched by private donations raised by the PCC Foundation, to enable 50 low-income and first-in-family high school graduates in Beaverton to attend PCC tuition-free, with hands-on success coaching before and during their studies.

Beaverton has been contributing general fund monies to social services causes for quite some time, generally in the range of \$250,000 to \$300,000 per year. We have a long-established Social Service Funding Committee which reviews grant applications and recommends awards to the City Council. Our contribution to PCC Future Connect was in addition to our annual grant program.

I hope that Beaverton will repeat this contribution and help another 50 students enter college next year with aspirations and support. The PCC Future Connect program provides more than just tuition, more than just an education for each individual. Besides the coaching and mentoring that help each individual succeed, it helps establish a culture of education in each family that sends a student to PCC to begin life as a college-educated adult. That culture of education magnifies the effect of the program, touching siblings, cousins, parents, friends, and increases the probability that more students will aspire to and reach for a college education. This is a broad, long-lasting community benefit we should celebrate and work to expand.

I think we all know people who were first-in-family college attendees. My parents are two such people. I grew up assuming college would be an option. How many high school students have never made that assumption, have never thought that they might have the opportunity?

Programs such as PCC Future Connect, programs that could be funded by the systems described in HB 4116, can provide that opportunity to many more students than cities such as Beaverton can do on our own. I would encourage you to support this bill, and provide substantial state funding for the programs across the state that can create new dreams and new opportunities that will benefit all of us for years to come.

Let's keep expanding the culture of education in Oregon.

Thank you,

Marc San Soucie
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