

AFT-Oregon Testimony in Support of HB 4116

The American Federation of Teachers-Oregon represents over 12,000 members across the state. Our members work in the private and public sectors in elementary and high schools, child care centers, and community colleges and four-year colleges.

Earlier generations of Oregonians knew the promise of affordable and accessible post-secondary education for every student. The members of AFT-Oregon believe we need to reclaim that promise. As state support for colleges and universities has declined, tuition has risen, and this has left students assuming unreasonable levels of debt to attend college and, even worse, prevented many from enrolling altogether. We have to relieve the costs of post-secondary education that have been shifted onto students and families across the country and across Oregon. In our state, we have to reclaim the promise made to everyone in Oregon, regardless of race, gender, or economic means, to have the opportunity to go to college and succeed in their careers and their lives. We have to support diverse institutions that provide a rich educational environment for all students. We have to ensure that, as Oregon works towards our 40/40/20 goals that no student is left out. That is the promise that has led our members to dedicate themselves to education.

House Bill 4116 works towards all of these goals. By focusing resources on increasing the number of underserved, low-income and first-generation college-bound students who enroll in community college, we are making sure that more of Oregon's students are able to fulfill their post-secondary aspirations. We urge you to support House Bill 4116.