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March 11th, 2015

To: House Committee on Higher Education, Innovation and Workforce Development

From: Scott Compton

Re: HB 2516-4

Hello Chair Read, Vice-Chairs Gallegos and Whisnant, and Members of the committee,

I thank you for the opportunity to present my experience with the costs of textbooks and their relationship to tuition affordability. My name is Scott Compton, and I am a second year student at Lane Community College. Today I am speaking on behalf of the Oregon Student Association, representing over 120,000 students at public universities and community colleges. I am here today to urge you to support HB2516 and the proposed -4 amendment to address the hidden burden of textbooks that Oregon students such as myself face today.

I am a lifelong resident of Eugene Oregon, where I've grown up under a single mother who's a postal clerk. Through her literal back breaking labor, I've been able to attend a community college as a first generation college student. My mom gave me an opportunity to go to school that she never had. My mom wasn't able to afford a higher education straight out of high school, which left her with a job where she's had to have multiple surgeries due to the strenuous work she puts in. This has been a major factor for wanting to get a higher education degree myself; because I don't want to have a job to get by that I have to face real physical consequences for. While I don't know exactly what I want to do yet, I want to have the ability to make the choice for myself as to where my life will lead me. This ability to get a degree is getting harder and harder, because the compounded cost of tuition added to the cost of text books is getting out of hand. While I can usually afford the textbooks, sometimes I simply don't pick them up because the financial strain on my family isn't possible to hold. Having to deny the use of materials which are meant to ensure my education is a choice I should never have to make. I went to Lane because the cost of tuition and fees is less there, than it is at most universities, however, one thing they all have in common is the outrageous cost of text books.

This is an issue that affects students young and old, whether they're at a community college or university. This is why Open Oregon State is so important to me. While this is a pilot program, it has the ability to make a real difference. The amount of student loan debt I'll have to incur, in my upcoming years, after I transfer to the University of Oregon and have to continue paying high costs. The foresight in my ability to determine the way textbook prices will impact my course load and graduation plan is important. The ability to pursue tangible cost-effective alternatives is crucial. It is for these reasons I ask you all today to support HB2516-4 and the proposed amendment to address this urgency and help students as myself continue their quick progression through academia to the workforce.

Thank you for your time,

Scott Compton