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March 9, 2015

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

From: Christian Mello, Lane Community College

RE: House Bill 2516 -4

Chair Read, Vice Chairs Gallegos and Whisnant, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Christian Mello, and I am student of Lane Community College, as well as a member of the Oregon Student Association. I'm an undergraduate who is majoring in Computer Science, and I will soon be getting my Associate's Degree. I'm here representing all of those who haven't gotten as far as me due to the prohibitive costs of class materials, especially college textbooks. On these grounds I urge you to support HB2516 and its -4 amendment.

When I was living with my family, not worrying about financial situations or paying for things on my own, I was very much unaware of the true price of college. After losing financial aid I was forced to pay for college on my own and realized very quickly that there would have to be sacrifices if I wanted to pass the simplest of classes. One thing that schools don't consider is the drastic cost that comes on top of tuition; for instance, while I was taking physics course just last term, my tuition was a total of \$490 for the course, at \$98 a credit. What I didn't realize until after I registered for the course was the cost of materials. The entirety of the required book pack was \$400, which made up over 80% of the cost of the tuition. To add onto this, a few of the books in the pack weren't even used for the course, and given that the book was in a sealed plastic pack, none of the books were returnable after opening. This was at my college bookstore, and it took me scouring the Internet to find a remotely better deal. Had I known about this implicit cost prior to registration and class selection I might have been able to plan more accordingly.

This sort of practice is completely unforgiveable, and the only way we can stop this is with the support of bills like HB 2516 and the proposed amendment. Without the help of alternatives like the Open Oregon State Program, we are continuously losing students who might not be as savvy as I am to high textbook costs, when their money could be better spent on a place to live or food to eat. Many students find themselves pirating textbooks, stealing material rather than spending money on it to make sure they even have a chance at staying out of debt.

For these reasons I urge you to support HB2516 and the proposed – 4 amendment.

Thank you for your time.