

SUPPORT SB 932

ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITY

BACKGROUND

In 2013, the legislature passed Tuition Equity (HB 2787) on a bipartisan vote in both chambers. Tuition Equity allowed students who met certain requirements to pay in-state tuition at Oregon's public universities regardless of documentation status. Since the passage of Tuition Equity, it has become clear that the original law includes some barriers to student access to higher education that should be removed.

OPPORTUNITY GRANT ELIGIBILITY

As the costs of attending a public university continue to rise, doing so without any form of financial aid is extremely difficult. Tuition Equity was a huge step forward for college access and affordability, but these students are not eligible to receive any federal financial aid or loans. They are also currently not eligible for state-based aid. This means that Tuition Equity students are faced with a significant up-front cost. Getting an undergraduate degree is nearly unattainable if you are low-income and have no access to financial aid.

SB 932 will allow tuition equity eligible students to access the Oregon Opportunity Grant (Oregon's only need based aid program) and other state-administered financial aid.

6 other states (TX, WA, CA, IL, NM and MN) already provide access to state financial aid for Tuition Equity students.

REMOVES UNREASONABLE CUTOFFS

Current Tuition Equity policy has unreasonable cutoffs that are preventing students from attending universities. SB 932 helps remove barriers to higher education for tuition equity eligible students by:

- **Removing the 3 year limit from time of high school graduation before initially enrolling in a public university.** Many students are attending community college before transferring to a university. For financial reasons, some are obliged to attend part-time. The three-year deadline is an impossible barrier for them.
- **Removing the 5 year period from initial enrollment in a public university where a student will be charged in-state tuition.** We know that many students take more than the traditional four years to complete their degree--especially those in lower income brackets.