



ASSOCIATION OF OREGON FACULTIES

April 14, 2015

To: Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education
Re: HB 5024 – Support for Higher Education Funding

Co-Chair Komp, Co-Chair Monroe, and members of the committee,

The Association of Oregon Faculties (AOF) is an independent, non-union based organization representing faculty from Oregon's seven public universities. AOF seeks to protect and improve the working environment and fair compensation for Oregon university faculty and to help ensure that the Oregon University System gets adequate funding in the state appropriations process.

HB 5024 is a step towards repairing years of decreasing support for higher education, however a more adequate level of funding is needed to even reach pre-recession levels of funding. On a national level, higher education in Oregon is woefully underfunded, ranking 47th in the nation in the level of state support. Yet, it is recognized that a highly trained workforce is a key element in creating and sustaining long-term economic opportunities--a key motivator for achieving 40-40-20. With students shouldering a greater and greater cost of higher education and entering the workforce carrying a high burden of debt, they are less able than previous generations to take on major financial risks (e.g., home ownership) that fuel a healthy economy. In other cases, the very prospect of such debt discourages potential students from considering higher education. While we recognize that HB 5024 is a shift in the right direction, Oregon needs to do much better in its support for higher education if we are to compete with other states and indeed the world in this global economy by offering the next generation a fair shot at success.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alan Bakalinsky". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Alan Bakalinsky, President,
On behalf of the Board,
Association of Oregon Faculties