

CO-CHAIR KOMP, CO-CHAIR MONROE, AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE,

FOR THE RECORD MY NAME IS JEFF DENSE, PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AT EASTERN OREGON UNIVERSITY AND PRESIDENT OF THE INTERINSTITUTIONAL FACULTY SENATE (IFS). WE REPRESENT THE FACULTY OF OREGON'S PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES.

IFS APPRECIATES THE HARD WORK OF SENATOR HASS IN HIGHLIGHTING THE ACCESS AND AFFORDABILITY LINCHPINS OF THE STATE'S AMBITIOUS 40/40/20 GOAL. IFS SHARES THE SENATOR'S CONCERNS ABOUT STUDENT DEBT. THE ABILITY OF OUR STUDENTS TO OBTAIN A COST-EFFECTIVE COLLEGE DEGREE IS ONE OF THE KEYS TO THE FUTURE OF THE STATE OF OREGON. HOWEVER, THERE ARE SEVERAL PROBLEMATIC ISSUES WITH SENATE BILL 81A THAT INHIBIT ITS POTENTIAL IMPACT ON STUDENTS. .

FIRST, SB81A DOES NOT ADDRESS THE SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN THE COST OF STUDENT FEES AT OREGON'S COMMUNITY COLLEGES. WHILE THERE ARE CURRENTLY SAFEGUARDS IN PLACE TO LIMIT ANNUAL INCREASES IN STUDENT TUITION, THERE IS CURRENTLY NO CORRESPONDING PROCEDURE TO LIMIT INCREASES IN STUDENT FEES. A RESEARCH PROJECT RECENTLY CONDUCTED BY STUDENTS IN MY APPLIED POLICY ANALYSIS CLASS REVEALED STUDENT FEES HAVE BEEN RAISED AN AVERAGE OF \$9 PER CREDIT HOUR AT OREGON'S COMMUNITY COLLEGES FOR THE 2008-2015 PERIOD. DESPITE THE GOOD INTENTIONS BEHIND SENATE BILL 81A, STUDENT RECEIVING THE BENEFITS OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE TUITION WAIVERS UNDER SENATE BILL 81A MAY CONFRONT AN INCREASE IN

THE NET PRICE OF THEIR EDUCATION, AS COMMUNITY COLLEGES RAISE STUDENT FEES TO MITIGATE THE EFFECT OF STATIC (OR LOWERED) TUITION REVENUE.

SECOND, THE LANGUAGE IN SENATE BILL 81, WHICH REQUIRES THE STUDENTS TO HAVE "ACCEPTED ALL STATE AND FEDERAL AID GRANTS AVAILABLE TO THE PERSON" MAY ADVERSELY IMPACT STUDENT ABILITY TO COMPLETE THEIR BACCALAUREATE DEGREE IN A TIMELY FASHION. GIVEN THE MAXIMUM AMOUNT AN INDIVIDUAL CAN RECEIVE IN FEDERAL PELL GRANTS, THIS STIPULATION MAY LEAVE STUDENTS WITHOUT SUFFICIENT FINANCIAL AID TO COMPLETE THEIR UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE. EXHAUSTING FINANCIAL AID SUPPORT BEFORE DEGREE COMPLETION CAN TRIGGER A VIRULENT CYCLE OF DEBT WHICH ADVERSELY IMPACTS STUDENT LIVES, ALONG WITH IMPAIRING ATTAINMENT OF THE STATE'S 40/40/20 GOALS.

FINALLY, THERE HAS BEEN DISCUSSION THE FUNDING TO IMPLEMENT SENATE BILL 81A WILL COME AT THE COST OF DIMINISHED FUNDING FOR THE OREGON OPPORTUNITY GRANT. AS NOTED BY THE STATE TREASURER, OPPORTUNITY GRANTS ARE AVAILABLE TO ONLY ONE OF FIVE STUDENTS THAT ARE ELIGIBLE AND APPLY. GIVEN THE UNDERFUNDING OF THE OREGON OPPORTUNITY GRANT, "ROBBING PETER TO PAY PAUL", I.E. REDUCING THE PROPOSED AMOUNT OF MONIES DEDICATED TO THE OREGON OPPORTUNITY GRANT TO PAY FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF SENATE BILL 81A WILL IMPAIR THE ABILITY OF OUR MOST NEEDY

STUDENTS TO BE PRODUCTIVE CITIZENS IN AN INCREASINGLY COMPETITIVE GLOBAL ECONOMY.

IFS FIRMLY BELIEVES IN THE PRECEPTS OF ACCESS AND AFFORDABILITY FOR HIGHER EDUCATION. HOWEVER, SENATE BILL 81A MAY LEAVE THE STATE HOLDING A SIGNIFICANT, AND UNDERFUNDED, FISCAL OBLIGATION WHICH HAS THE POTENTIAL TO NEGATIVELY EFFECT ADEQUATE FUNDING LEVELS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION, ESPECIALLY THE OREGON OPPORTUNITY GRANT. THE UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES LINKED TO SENATE BILL 81A, ESPECIALLY UNCHECKED STUDENT FEE INCREASES, EXHAUSTING PELL GRANT ELIGIBILITY BEFORE DEGREE COMPLETION, AND ADVERSE IMPACT ON OREGON OPPORTUNITY GRANT FUNDING, REQUIRE YOUR THOUGHTFUL DELIBERATION ON WHETHER SENATE BILL 81A SERVES THE BEST INTERESTS OF OUR MOST VALUABLE RESOURCE: OUR STUDENTS.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME, AND I WOULD BE GLAD TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE.