



Oregon Community College Association
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OCCA Urges Support of HB 4021

Chair Read, members of the committee, for the record, my name is John Wykoff and I'm the legislative director for the Oregon Community College Association (OCCA).

OCCA supports HB 4021 as valuable potential step forward in helping Oregonians pay for a college education and would like to thank Rep. Read for bringing this concept forward.

Nationally, students are borrowing more every year to finance their college education and are now averaging about \$30,000 in debt at the completion of a 4-year degree. For many students, the thought of taking on such high debt, keeps them from attempting college in the first place. For others it means struggling to pay their debt for many years after college, or worse, defaulting on loans they simply cannot afford to pay.

Throughout the last recession, like other states, Oregon's community colleges and public universities faced deep cuts in state support forcing institutions to raise tuition and increasing the burden on college students trying to afford an education. Growing reliance on tuition to operate colleges and universities means higher levels of borrowing for students and any efforts to help alleviate that burden would be welcomed by Oregon's 17 community colleges.

We would again like to thank Rep. Read for bringing this concept forward and look forward to participating in this process to find innovative ways to help ease the burden of financing a college education for our students. We urge a yes vote HB 4021.