



# American Association of University Professors

*Academic Freedom for a Free Society*

February 22, 2016

Senator Arnie Roblan, Chair  
Members of the Senate Committee on Education  
Oregon State Capitol  
Salem, OR 97301

## **Re: House Bill 4021-A: Support**

Dear Chair Roblan and members of the Senate Committee on Education,

On behalf of the more than 3000 members of the American Association of University Professors in Oregon, including members of our two collective bargaining chapters at Portland State University and the University of Oregon, we want to express our strong support for House Bill 4021-A.

Members of AAUP Oregon support student success across our state every day. We see what a difference higher education can make in a student's life and for his/her future. We are very concerned about the crisis in higher education funding and the growing levels of student debt our students are being forced to carry as a result. If those students were able to refinance their loans at better rates, through an Oregon solution, this would be a step in the right direction. This bill would ask the Treasurer, together with the Higher Education Coordinating Commission, to conduct a study of the feasibility of such a program for our state.

This is a modest, but sensible first step that eventually could make a difference to many of our students and Oregonians throughout the state. We believe public higher education should be affordable and debt-free. We have a long way to go to make that vision a reality, but any immediate steps we can take to ease Oregonians' student debt burdens are worth taking.

Thank you for considering this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Erna Gelles", is written over a light blue dashed line.

Erna Gelles, Vice President for Political Action  
AAUP-Oregon  
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