



# American Association of University Professors

*Academic Freedom for a Free Society*

March 22, 2017

Chair Margaret Doherty; Vice Chairs Diego Hernandez and Carl Wilson  
Members of the House Committee on Education  
Oregon State Capitol  
Salem, OR 97301

**Re: House Bill 2587**

Dear Chair Doherty and members of the Committee,

My name is Ramin Farahmandpur. I am a professor in the Graduate School of Education at Portland State University, where I've taught for 15 years. I serve as the chair of the Legislative Committee of the AAUP chapter at Portland State University. I am also the Legislative Vice President-Elect for AAUP-Oregon. Thank you for your service to our state and for the opportunity to testify today.

On behalf of 3400 members of the American Association of University Professors in Oregon, and our faculty chapters at the University of Oregon and Portland State University, I am here to ask that you please support HB 2587.

The 2012 American Community Survey of the U.S. Census Bureau reports that 40 percent of Oregonians have an Associate's Degree or higher. Topping the list is Massachusetts with 50 percent, followed by Colorado, Minnesota and New Hampshire. Compared to other states, Oregon's degree attainment is slightly above the national average.

The state's 40-40-20 goals, however, require 80 percent of Oregonians to complete a postsecondary degree or certificate by 2025, surpassing Massachusetts and other states topping the list. Given that Oregon's disinvestment in public K12 and higher education persists, the likelihood that the state will be able to achieve these ambitious numerical goals within the next eight years is slim.

To compound the problem, the proponents of the original 40-40-20 schema failed to consider the truth about workforce demands in 2025. According to the Oregon Employment Department's January 2017 report, "The Importance of Education in the Labor Market" by Karla Castillo:

Among occupations, the largest number of openings will be in occupations that have low educational requirements and that are low wage. This reflects, to some extent, the effect of job polarization in Oregon. Opportunities for middle-wage jobs may be

shrinking, with simultaneous growth concentrated at the high and low ends of the spectrum. The fastest growing occupations will be those that require an advanced degree (17.4%) and those that require less than a high school degree (16.4%).

We believe that the scope of the state's public education mission must expand beyond its limited focus on degree attainment by providing students with opportunities and support mechanisms for their intellectual and emotional growth as well as their preparedness for civic engagement. HB 2587, by focusing on meeting students' diverse needs and not just the imagined demands of future employers, sets a better mission for comprehensively educating our students than the numerical formula it hopes to replace.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ramin Farahmandpur". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Ramin Farahmandpur, Ph.D.

Chair, Legislative Committee, PSU-AAUP

Vice President for Political Action-Elect, AAUP-Oregon