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Chair Roblan and members of the committee,

On behalf of the Oregon Students Association, we wanted to speak to our concerns over Senate bills 576 and 443. These bills direct considerable portion of the Oregon Opportunity Grant to specifically benefit STEM majors in Oregon. Students do not support this bill for many reasons; the largest ones being that the Oregon Opportunity Grant is a finite and vital resource to students regardless of major, and it already only serves 30% of students who need it.

Every financial aid season, the FAFSA website is flooded with students all over the country who apply for limited funds to attend college later in the year. Students typically apply in December or January (as soon as they possibly can) and hope they receive some type of aid months later when it is time to start a new school year.

The belief may be that by incentivizing STEM with grant money, more students will be interested in pursuing STEM degrees, but what this really does is create a value statement about what students should be doing with their lives in the eyes of decision makers. A student who may want to major in sociology or anthropology to further the world's understanding on important subjects should have equal access to receiving financial aid.

The cost to attend higher education is already pricing students out of what they truly want to do, and by taking funding away from the general pool to be directed to a specific group of students only continues to restrict access to higher education. The Oregon Opportunity grant doesn't reach the amount of students who need it already, and by portioning it off to specific groups, you will be ensuring that it won't.

On behalf of students across this state, please consider our concerns for SB 443 or SB 576.

Thank you.

Oregon Students Association