



Date: April 10, 2017

To: Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education

From: Jim Salt, LCC Instructor and Faculty Association President LCC

Re: Community College Budget SB 5524

Good morning Chairs Monroe and Smith-Warner, members of the committee,

My name is Dr. Jim Salt; I am a sociology instructor at Lane Community College, where I have served for almost 15 years as President of the Association representing 528 faculty members; I also serve as President of the Oregon Education Association Community College Council, representing 3,900 faculty and classified staff members in 17 locals at 10 community colleges across our state.

We are here today to plead that you provide at least the \$634M for the Community College Support Fund. I'm going to speak predominantly about what's happening at Lane Community College since I know it best; other campuses are facing similar realities. I want to draw your attention to testimony that has been submitted to you in writing from Cathy Chapman one of our members who works as an enrollment services assistant at Umpqua Community College. Cathy just learned that her position is being eliminated due to funding cuts. She loves her work and she loves Umpqua and wanted to share her story with you.

Like our colleagues at K-12 institutions, and all other public institutions and employees across the state, we depend upon state funding to be able to fulfill our missions. Despite, and partly because of, the 'robust' economy, we are in very difficult times, and we really need your support.

When I get back to campus today I expect to be informed that eight instructional programs are being recommended for closure, two student service programs cut, and at least 15 faculty members laid off, due to an \$11M projected budget deficit next year. This will cut critical student services, and eliminate career technical and transfer programs for students, programs led by faculty members who have dedicated their professional lives to our college, but 10 weeks from now would be without jobs.

Why? In part because during the recession our colleges did all we could to meet the community's need for education and retraining; LCC's enrollments rose by 42% as we opened our doors to everyone who needed us, providing both education and, less well known, access to federal financial aid that literally kept tens of thousands of families from hunger and even homelessness.

With historically low unemployment now, many of the students we would normally have today aren't here, partly because they're employed, but partly because they already attended 'early' due to the recession. That's is, students we'd normally have now, were already here during the Great Recession. In a few years this 'donut hole' will naturally disappear and our enrollments will return to normal, but we simply don't have the tuition revenue right now to offset the lack of full funding from the state. We've managed for a while, paying our bills using savings from the high enrollment recession years, but those savings are gone.

As such, LCC's Budget Development committee, which I chair, is planning on recommending to our Board of Education that LCC's tuition rates be set based upon the size of the Community College Support Fund, similar to what the University of Oregon Board has done. If we receive only the Co-Chair's recommendation of \$500,000,000, LCC would then raise our tuition rates by \$15 per credit, a 14% hike; such hikes would simply further balance our books on the backs of students that can't pay, increasing student debt and preventing others from even attending, threatening our mission as the community's college. But if we receive the requested \$634M, under our recommendation we would avoid raising tuition beyond the small \$2 inflation adjustment previously approved by the Board.

In short, if we don't get the funding we need from you, our choice is simple: dramatically raise tuition rates, or start cutting the programs and support our community and students rely upon, or some combination of both. We respectfully ask that you not force us to make this 'Sophie's choice.' The students and want-to-be students, faculty and staff at our colleges, and communities across our state are depending upon you. Please fund us at least at the \$634M request, and please move forward on real revenue reform that our state vitally needs.

Thank you kindly.