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Chairs Hass and Barnhart, members of the committee:

My name is Donald Thompson I am the Student Body Vice President at Portland State University, I'm a biochemistry and health sciences major entering into my junior year. I'd like to acknowledge the efforts put forth by many to get us here, discussing how we can work together to address the budget deficit and ways to keep money in higher education. I want to recognize that the work that we've done to get here is seen and appreciated, but that we need to do more; as promising a start we've had we need to go further and raise more money for higher education. We need to get to 765 million for universities and 155 million for the Oregon Opportunity grant.

Why? In my case, I will likely graduate PSU with around 40,000 dollars in debt. This money will have been used to cover expenses like tuition, rent for housing and food to sustain me. If the last few years and recent headlines are any indicator, rent and food aren't getting cheaper.

My experience is by no means unique. As it stands with tuition increases, we are losing valuable members of our community who have already invested so much to be here. Brilliant people have dropped out. I've known students who contributed to their community and who would be here testifying on behalf of themselves and their peers had they not been priced out of the university *before* tuition increases. Low income students are hit harder by tuition increases, and the impact disinvestment from higher education has can be seen most clearly when these students are kept from participating by cost barriers.

It's not just low income students, though. For many of my marginalized peers, the cost can be the last straw. For some, who already feel unsafe or disallowed from the campus community, the additional barrier that increased tuition represents can be what dissuades them from attending our schools. Their schools. This is a failing that cannot be ignored, and we cannot afford to lose these valuable members of our community. We've failed them enough by not welcoming them and their experience, and to not consider the impact that higher education funding has on the promotion of diversity would be another failure, one that I cannot abide by.

We need you all to come out and have the drive and moral imperative to make an Oregon that cares about the future that students, especially diverse students, represents. Oregon students need the legislature to act now to make sure college doesn't become even more out of reach.