

To: CHAIR WAGNER AND THE MEMBERS OF THE SENATE EDUCATION BILL, SENATE BILL794

I WRITE THIS IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 794

A significant number of women attending our public colleges and community colleges today do so while also caring for dependent children. Unfortunately, Oregon doesn't track how many of our students find themselves in this situation. We can't determine whether student parents graduate at the same or different rates. We don't know whether student parents drop out at the same rates as students without children, take longer to obtain a degree or feel they must limit their career aspirations.

National data show that 53% of student parents will not complete a college degree. Only 28% of single mothers graduate with a degree or certificate within 6 years of enrollment and another 55% leave school before earning any college credential at all. Low-income college students with children are 25% less likely to obtain a degree than low-income adults without children.

The bottom line: A college education provides dignity to the students and a way up and out of economically fragile situations. However, the impacts of a college education extends far beyond the student parent. Parents who complete or are obtaining a college degree serve as an essential role model for their children, and their education success reaches to the second and third generations. They also become income generating citizens of Oregon's economy.

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