



Portland Community College
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April 10, 2019

Co-Chair Roblan, Co-Chair Smith Warner, Co-Vice Chair Knopp, Co-Vice Chair Smith and
Members of the Joint Committee on Student Success

Subject: Don't Leave College Students Behind in New Education Funding

Legislators have a once-in-decade opportunity to invest in Oregon students and reform Oregon's tax system, but the current plan laid out in House Bill 2019 leaves college students behind.

By 2020, 65 percent of new jobs are expected to require education and training beyond high school. To provide Oregonians the opportunity they need to thrive and for businesses to help grow the economy, we need to support students from cradle to career.

Since Measure 5, Oregon students have seen tuition increases vastly outpace inflation while programs and services have been cut because state investment fell further behind. Student debt is higher than it's ever been.

In 2014, my family and I immigrated to the United States from Vietnam. It was one of the hardest things I ever had to do. Since my parents have a limited knowledge of English, they can only work in low-income jobs. We live paycheck to paycheck. I am the one who has to take responsibility for grocery shopping, translating paperwork, and driving my dad to physical therapy, my mom to work, and my little brother to school. I contribute to food and housing costs.

All of these chores have landed on me when I am in my first year in college. I thought about dropping out of college and getting a job to help my parents. However, they told me that when I graduate from college, all their hardship will pay off. Because of them, I take school seriously. Education is the only way to help me escape poverty. Life is hard and has a lot of challenges, but if I am persistent and have goals for the future, nothing will be impossible.

I am a Portland Community College student now, but my goal is to earn a Master's Degree in Education. Eventually, I want to work at a community college. I really want to help students, not only with career plans, but also with things like financial aid or getting food. I do not want those things to affect their focus on studying. I want to see all students succeed.

I urge you to support Governor Kate Brown's call for including post-secondary education in the spending proposal before this committee.

Nhi Truong