

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.

My grandfather was born in Mexico. When he was 13 years old, his father tried to kill him. He ran away and crossed the desert, making long journey from Guadalajara to California on foot, alone. He worked picking fruit and vegetables. My grandmother was a child laborer, and a migrant worker, moving from town to town. She was the youngest of nine children. Orphaned, she and her siblings worked to support each other. Eventually she also found herself working in California. My grandparents met there, and the rest is history.

I have always been interested in learning, much to the delight of my family. I was encouraged to keep learning things, and keep reaching farther. My high school graduation was a moment of great pride for them all; neither my grandparents nor my father graduated from high school. I continue to seek reaching new heights of education on behalf of my family. Later, when I graduate with my bachelor's in engineering, I will be the first in my family with a college degree.

When I think of my grandparents as children, I wonder if they could imagine their next meal, much less their grandchildren receiving a college education. Success despite all odds is my family's legacy. By pursuing and achieving my academic goals, I hope to add to this story of intergenerational success.

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

Katia Cazares