

April 17, 2019

TO : Joint Committee On Student Success (JCCS)

Thank you to this committee - first for doing the difficult work of crafting policy about how to help our students succeed and then for taking on the thankless task of funding this.

I think there is broad agreement about the goals and, even, the proposed implementation of HB2019, so I wish to write about the funding of this bill.

I'm old enough to remember when business not only paid more taxes but took more responsibility for the social safety net. For example, in 1973, businesses in Oregon paid 18.5% of the income taxes collected in the state. Now they pay under 7 %. At the same time, they were paying federal taxes at a 48% tax rate. Now they pay only 21%. And many corporations pay no tax at all because of a plethora of tax subsidies and loopholes.

But the even bigger contrast is in the role of business in the life of its employees. Businesses used to provide substantial pensions for their long term employees. Often this included health insurance after retirement. Businesses also used to be much more involved in training employees for the specific jobs they moved into.

Businesses retained employees for years, often for all of their working life. They took on the increased salaries that came with longevity. They sometimes took a financial hit in order to keep long time employees in jobs.

Today, we ask education system to fund training to suit the needs of business. The rise of CTE is great, but we must acknowledge that we are doing training that businesses and trade groups used to do in the past.

Today, employees are laid off at the whim of a corporate takeover or desire to keep the bottom line impressive for stockholders.

Today, we struggle to find ways to house and care for our elderly citizens who used to have reliable pensions in their retirement. We also cover their health care, often through Medicaid because they don't have any pension income in retirement.

This is not true of all businesses. Some still try to show responsibility to the people who play a big role in their success - their workers. But the businesses who refuse to come to the table to negotiate a fair role in funding education in this state do a disservice to its citizens.

Business benefits from a myriad of state programs but do not pay their fair share in addressing the biggest problem we face - reliable funding of an excellent educational system. So thank you to this committee and all the legislators who vote to open the door for business to once again take on the responsibility it owes us all.

I strongly support the passage of HB 3427-1/HB 2019-9.

Thank you,
Carol Greenough, Ph.D.