

To: Chair Doherty and members of the House Education Committee  
Re: OEA's support for HB 4160

Chair Doherty, members of the committee,

My name is Traci Hodgson. I am a history professor at Chemeketa Community College, and the President of OEA's Community College Council and a member of OEA's executive board. Thank you for allowing me to testify on HB 4160 today.

The Oregon Education Association represents about 47,000 educators and education support professionals across Oregon. About 4,500 of these work at 11 of our 17 community colleges. These people include faculty, part-time faculty, councilors, administrative assistants, and others who have daily contact with our community college students.

Daily, we hear from our membership about the struggles our students face. From single moms juggling kids, work and schools unable to find childcare; to emerging bi-lingual students unable to get the support they need to complete a class; to reentering adult learners who can't get retrained for emerging sectors in the economy; to students facing mental health crises unable to receive the care they need. I could go on. The needs of our students are varied and unmet.

The lack of access to these critical services, education supports, and courses, makes completion of programs and retention of students impossible. We, as faculty and classified staff in our colleges, are constantly seeing talented and dedicated students driven away from the opportunities higher education opens, because the system can't provide them with basic needs to help them succeed.

HB 4160 is a much needed opportunity to spark a conversation with these students and their advocates across the state. Reaching out directly to students and stakeholders will give the legislature the best opportunity to learn how to support our students in our institutions of higher education.

OEA would make one recommendation to the bill; that we change sections 1.3 and 1.4 to read "students *and stakeholders*" so that we can include the voices of councilors and faculty who work with, and hear the stories of our students daily. With that, we are very supportive of HB 4160, and very excited to participate in the conversation that flows from it in any way possible.

Thank you.