



February 4th, 2020

House Committee on Education
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Chair Doherty and members of the committee,

College Students experience hunger, homelessness, food and housing insecurity at alarming rates. Food and housing insecurity on campus hinders academic achievement, worsens health outcomes, and threatens economic mobility. These factors can both be the reason a student is seeking a degree, and at the same time what might be preventing a student from completing a degree.

As institutions and advocacy organizations that represent universities, community colleges, students, and the hunger and housing affordability community, we ask that you support Oregon House Bill 4055.

According to the Oregon Hunger Task Force, “Three in four undergraduates defy traditional stereotypes. Just 13% live on college campuses, and nearly half attend community colleges. One in four students is a parent, juggling childcare responsibilities with class assignments. About 75% work for pay while in school, including a significant number of full-time workers.”¹

HB 4055 requires the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) to compile a report that will provide an in-depth understanding of the prevalence of food and housing insecurity of students across all Oregon public universities and community colleges. It also will provide recommendations for new policies, including budgetary increases, to help combat food and housing insecurity on Oregon’s campuses.

¹ Oregon Hunger Task Force (2018), *Creating Policies for a Hunger-Free Oregon*, Issue Brief: Hunger and Food Insecurity on College Campuses in Oregon.

This legislation is the result of our collaboration to address the unique needs of college students, because we all recognize that too many students are unable to access adequate food and lack safe and stable housing, which dramatically impacts their ability to achieve academic and long-term success as citizens and members of our communities in Oregon.

We know food and housing insecurity directly affect student success. National studies have shown students who experience food and housing insecurity are more likely to have lower grades than food secure students and are more likely to experience academic disruptions, such as taking lighter course loads or neglecting studies².

While there is no one solution to combating food and housing insecurity among Oregon's college students, HB 4055 and demonstrates the legislature's desire to begin understanding and tackling this critical issue from a statewide level.

Sincerely,

Oregon Student Association
Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon
Oregon Food Bank
Stand for Children
Oregon Community College Association
Oregon State University
University of Oregon
Portland State University
Western Oregon University
Eastern Oregon University
Southern Oregon University
Oregon Institute of Technology
Oregon Health & Science University

² Katharine Broton & Sara Goldrick-Rab (2016) The Dark Side of College (Un)Affordability: Food and Housing Insecurity in Higher Education, Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning, 48:1, 16-25, DOI: 10.1080/00091383.2016.1121081