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Greetings & Talofa Chairs Rayfield, Steiner Hayfield, and Johnson and members of the Joint Ways and Means Committee,

Before the pandemic, students were already struggling to make ends meet due to various factors. Now a year later since the onset of the pandemic, students are desperately struggling to make ends meet. The growing number of obstacles students are encountering is disheartening, thus hindering student success and retention rates. The current funding allocated towards the Oregon Opportunity Grant (\$290 Million), Public University Support Fund (\$900 million), and Community College Support Fund (\$702 million) is not enough to genuinely support students as they continue their journey throughout higher education. Education should be a basic human right, not for those who are privileged enough to afford it.

Please help universities dismantle systemic inequalities by allocating enough funding to help make education both more affordable and accessible. Please invest in the next generation of the Oregonian workforce, who are currently in school trying to make a future for themselves and to some extent the economy as well. I'm also writing in support for HB2835: Basic Navigators Bill and HB2590: Student Voice Bill. Both bills support student success initiatives that if approved will drastically improve the accessibility and the amount of resources available for students to help them through higher ed. For future inquiries I would be more than happy to meet with you all individually or within an upcoming committee hearing. Please reach out to my contact information above for any additional information.

Please vote yes on HB 2835, HB 2590, and for increased allocations for education funding.

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "MSipelii".

Motutama N. Sipelii