

Hello members of the ways and means committee,

My name is Nick Keough, I am a student at the University of Oregon, and I am here today asking that you allocate \$290 M to the Oregon Opportunity Grant.

On a day to day basis, virtually all my money goes towards rent, food, and transportation. While I wish I had healthcare, I simply cannot afford it when I can barely afford to keep myself fed, keep myself in school, and keep a roof over my head. If I didn't have these challenges, I am sure that my success as a student would benefit because much of my capacity would be freed up to focus on my studies.

When I came to college I thought the hardest part would be my studies, but quickly realized that the hardest part of being able to access a higher education in Oregon is the financial burden it has placed on myself and my family. I am first-generation, low-income, non-traditional student and my family has made so many sacrifices for me to get this far. I remember crying every week of my first term at the UO because I had to call my parents and tell them that I couldn't afford the cost of attendance. My family had no working vehicles at the time and only had the capacity to take out a loan for a car (for their livelihood) so they were not in a position to also take out a loan for my school as well. In the end, we finally paid my bill the last week of the term but it placed an enormous burden on my family. Every term was like that until I turned 24 and my EFC went to \$0 so I finally was eligible for the Pell Grant and the Oregon Opportunity Grant.

There are so many folks out there who need this grant and aren't getting it simply because Salem hasn't funded it enough. We need more funding for this grant and ideally that should be coupled with the legislator demanding better governance and fiscal transparency from the universities as well. Please Allocate \$290 M to the Oregon Opportunity Grant for this next biennium.

Thank you for your consideration,

Nick Keough