



April 23, 2021

Ways and Means
900 State Street NE, Room H-178,
Salem OR 97301

RE: HB 5555

Chairs Johnson, Steiner Hayward, Rayfield and Members of the Committee,

I write today to ask that you support Oregonians pursuing higher education by investing \$900M in the Public University Support Fund and \$200M in the Oregon Opportunity Grant. Funding these requests will make a four-year degree an achievable goal for many for whom it would otherwise be out of reach. Speaking as both a graduate and deeply involved volunteer of Oregon State University (OSU), I can attest that supporting students and giving them the tools they need to graduate and launch their careers is of paramount importance to OSU. Fully funding the PUSF and OOG will have direct, positive impacts for students at risk of not completing their education because of financial hardship.

On the topic of equipping students to succeed, I also ask that you allocate \$13.8M in bond funding to complete the Student Success Center at OSU-Cascades, adding to the \$5M that students are contributing via a fee they voted to assess themselves. Enrollment at OSU-Cascades continues to rise because of the demand for higher education in Central Oregon, and this facility will house counseling and career services programs that will help students attain and put their degrees to use. The demand for skilled workers in the region is intense, and facilities such as this will help to fill those vacancies with Oregonians.

I know you face difficult choices as you determine what your budget priorities will be. Investing in higher education translates into a multitude of benefits that touch every community in the state, and for that reason I ask for your support of OSU and Oregon's other public universities.

Best Regards,

Ruth Beyer

Ruth Beyer
Member, Beaver Caucus Board of Directors