

Co-Chairs Johnson, Steiner-Hayward, and Rayfield, Co-Vice Chairs, and members of the committee,

My name is Maya Herb. I am a student at Western Oregon University in Monmouth Oregon where I run the Food Pantry. I am writing to request your support for HB2835.

I am advocating for HB2835, which would install a Basic Needs Benefits Navigator on each Oregon college and university campus. In 2020 a study conducted across 11 Oregon campuses showed 71% of students had been food insecure at some point in the past 12 months. Through my work at the WOU Food Pantry I can vouch for the validity of this statistic. Students need these basic needs programs. I am currently the person students at WOU can come to to receive assistance applying for SNAP and students need this help. There are no other resources to receive assistance applying for benefits such as healthcare, housing assistance, and many more benefits that students are eligible for. Students attempting to navigate these systems for the first time don't know what they don't know. Passing HB2835 would ensure that the students receive the help they need in order to focus on their studies. This bill has an ask of \$5.2 million funded either through ARPA or the General Fund. This is a worthwhile investment in order to enable students to access federal benefits and ultimately graduate. Oregon State University has been able to afford the position that this bill would install on all campuses. This one position has connected over 400 students with more than \$500,000 in federal benefits. Supporting HB2835 is a vital investment that will keep students fed, housed, and able to continue their studies.

Thank you,

Maya Herb  
Western Oregon University Food Pantry  
Monmouth Oregon