

May 3, 2021

Oregon Joint Committee on Ways and Means  
Subcommittee on Education  
900 Court Street, NE  
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Investment in College Possible Oregon

Co-Chair Frederick, Co-Chair McLain and members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education,

My name is Salvador Garcia Lopez and I am a proud College Possible alumni. I'm writing to request you support the 2021-23 Governor's Recommended Budget requests of a \$1 million investment in the HECC budget for College Possible Oregon.

Before joining College Possible, I had no idea how I was going to apply for college. I knew I wanted to go to college, but I didn't know the process of doing it all from taking the ACT, to filing the FAFSA and applying for scholarships. I was nervous because no one from my family had gone to college before me so they couldn't help me with the college application process. I wanted a resource that was going to help me get to college and after attending a College Possible information session back in 2013, I knew I wanted this program to help me because the staff were very friendly and approachable, and all the students that were there were motivated to go to college. What kept me involved with College Possible were the coaches that were super encouraging throughout my college journey. They introduced me to opportunities like enrichment programs during the summers, scholarships and asked me to speak at two College Possible events. Those events were opportunities to meet people from other schools and for soon-to-be College Possible college students to know what college is like as a College Possible student.

I first attended Portland Community College and my coach fully supported me and my decision after we talked about my finances. After two years at PCC, I transferred to Western Oregon University—and my college coach was with me from start to finish. She helped me decide after she encouraged me to look in depth at the financial aid packages, course catalogs and what I wanted out of a college which was a small class size environment.

In total, I ended up having six coaches throughout my time with College Possible. They were all super helpful and were all people that I was comfortable going to for help. To me they were like older siblings that attended college who I could go to for help or advice about finances, getting involved, or difficult classes. I'm still in contact with most of them to this day.

My College Possible coaches taught me to never give up and that it's okay to fail as long as you learned something from it because that failure then becomes a lesson which helps in the long run. They were there for me when I got rejected from colleges, didn't win scholarships, wasn't chosen for jobs, or failed an exam. Their words of encouragement kept me pushing forward with a positive mindset. I've had coaches be my references for countless jobs and also had a coach who helped me apply for a credit builder program even after her term of service was over. My coaches have continued to be a support system to me even after they have completed their term of service.

Now that I have earned my degree, I plan on going to graduate school to get a Masters in Education to begin my career goal of being a high school science teacher. Having a Bachelor's degree gets me one step closer towards achieving my goal of being a teacher. I believe that by earning this degree I will have more opportunities for employment which will help me get my family and me out of poverty.

Thank you for your time today and for considering additional support of College Possible and helping more students like me earn their college degrees.

Sincerely,

**Salvador Garcia Lopez**  
Reynolds High School, '15  
Portland Community College, '17  
Western Oregon University, '20