

Chairs Frederick, McLain, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Daisy Clark, and I'm from Gaston, Oregon. I am an Oregon Opportunity Grant recipient and student at the University of Oregon. The Oregon Opportunity Grant has played an important role in making it possible for me to attend college, and I urge you to invest \$200 million in the grant to ensure that more students have a path to higher education. It's time to restore opportunity for all Oregon students.

I'm a third-year student studying general social science with a focus in crime, law, and society. While I had this focus before the racial reckoning of 2020, it has never been clearer that our state needs to invest in educational programs that give students the necessary tools to understand the justice system and advocate for policy changes that will advance racial and economic equity. It's also never been clearer that we need to invest in the ability of students from diverse backgrounds to be a part of these programs. For too long, BIPOC, rural, and lower- and middle-income students haven't had the same access to this training and education. Nearly one-third of OOG recipients come from marginalized groups including underserved racial/ethnic groups, women, rural, and first generation students. Expanding the Oregon Opportunity Grant expands opportunity for the students who need it most.

Some have said that we don't need to invest more in the OOG because students have also received grants from federal aid. However, getting some federal support one year, doesn't do anything to help students this year and the next. Additionally, myself and other students have significant need, and that need won't be met by a one-time federal investment.

For the 2018 academic year, 44% of Oregon students were able to meet expenses with the expected resources: expected family contribution, student earnings, most institutional aid, and all grant aid. The financial issues that students face have also been exacerbated by the pandemic. An expansion of the Oregon Opportunity Grant will play an important role in helping students afford college and meet their basic needs during these difficult times. Our state's equitable recovery depends on it.

Thank you for listening to students like me, and for making investments in our future. I hope you'll fund the Oregon Opportunity Grant at \$200 million so that all Oregon students are able to receive an education and give back to our state.