

Submitter: Dana Young
On Behalf Of: Treasure Valley Community College
Committee: Senate Committee On Finance and Revenue
Measure: SJR203

Chair Beyer, Vice-Chair Boquist, and Members of the Committee:

For the record, my name is Dr. Dana Young, President of Treasure Valley Community College in Ontario, Oregon.

Thank you for the opportunity to send written testimony regarding SJR 203 which refers to removing a requirement that bonded indebtedness incurred under Article XI-G be matched by an amount at least equal to the amount of indebtedness.

There are statewide inequities in access to Article XI-G bonds due to challenges in securing local matches because of high poverty rates in many of these districts, particularly in Malheur County. We are working to change that, but currently, it is still our reality. This means students in the most impoverished and rural parts of the state lack access to up-to-date education and training facilities in key areas.

I'd like to share our story at TVCC and provide support for other rural colleges that have infrastructure and facility needs but have not been able to secure matching funds.

An \$8 million General Obligation Bond does not cost the same across our state.

There is a wide disparity in out-of-pocket expenses that taxpayers experience between different community college districts in Oregon, depending on the tax base of each of these districts.

For instance, that \$8 million Bond costs a taxpayer in the Portland Community College District a mere \$0.47 per year for every \$100,000 of taxable property, while that same Bond will cost a taxpayer in Treasure Valley Community College's rural district a whopping \$30.11 per year for every \$100,000 of taxable property, all because these taxpayers live in different parts of the state. While other variables certainly come into play, it isn't hard to see how this cost difference might make a voter in Ontario more reluctant to vote "Yes" for an \$8 million Bond Measure than a voter in Oregon's metropolitan or urban areas. Just like other rural community colleges, TVCC has tried to pass a local bond without success. The result of this is what we experience now: Unequitable access to capital construction resources – and unequitable access to quality community college educational opportunities – across our state.

Equally troubling is that several community colleges who have not been able to pass a District G.O. Bond have subsequently turned to borrowing to provide the matching funds, adding further burden to the limited operating resources of these schools for many years to come. To date, no fewer than five of the community colleges have found it necessary to turn to Certificates of Participation and/or Full Faith and Credit borrowing, incurring a collective \$27,731,250 in debt that is now being retired with payments out of the operating budgets of these institutions.