

Submitter: Lisa Skari

On Behalf Of: Mt. Hood Community College

Committee: Senate Committee on Finance and Revenue

Measure: S JR203

Chair Beyer, Vice-Chair Boquist and Honorable Committee Members.

For the record, my name is Dr. Lisa Skari and I serve as the President of Mt. Hood Community College. Under article XI-G, \$8 million is dedicated to Mt. Hood Community College to assist with our efforts in updating and expanding our campus.

In attempts to access these funds, we have taken to voters in three separate elections, a bond initiative that would have provided a match (2006, 2016 & 2017). Unfortunately for MHCC, voters have not passed a bond measure for our college since 1974.

As a result, our college which started in 1966, has struggled to keep up our facility and any major maintenance has been paid for by acquiring debt and redirecting general operating funds.

Over the past twenty years, we have had to acquire a debt of over \$33 – million to deal with capital needs. This includes re-roofing our facility, investing in a new HVAC system, upgrading our electrical system because the old system literally blew up, upgrading our fire alarm system, upgrading our technology infrastructure and so on.

This does not include the general fund dollars that we redirected to deal with deferred maintenance. These are dollars that should have been used for instructional purposes and student support.

As a result, this means the residents we serve are experiencing unequal levels of access to a community college education.

Our district has among the highest rates of poverty and low-income residents within the Portland metropolitan area, if not the state. We have seen an increase in recent years of residents who have been pushed out of Portland and into our district because of gentrification. Many of these from minority communities.

While our college exists within the shadow of Portland, our district stretches east to Mt. Hood, and includes many of the small communities that exist within East Multnomah County and North Clackamas County. These are small rural communities, like Corbett, Cascade Locks, Sandy and Welches.

We are truly a rural college, and like our sister rural colleges, we have not been able to come up with the match needed to access the funds that would assist us greatly in updating our aging facility, expanding programs, and really improving how we serve our communities.

I ask that you assist us in our educational efforts by supporting SJR 203 and give voters the opportunity to decide on amending the constitution and provide us the ability to access these much-needed dollars.

I thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Dr. Lisa Skari