



To: House Committee on Higher Education  
From: Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon  
Re: Support for HB 3089  
Date: February 7, 2023

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Chair Lively, Vice Chairs Ruiz and McIntire, Members of the House Higher Education Committee:

My name is Chris Baker, and I am the Legislative Strategist at Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon. We strongly support HB 3089 which would create an incentive program that would send funding to public colleges and universities that address student hunger on campus.

Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon (PHFO) is a statewide anti-poverty advocacy organization with a small staff of under 15 members. We understand that leadership comes from those with lived experience and that hunger and poverty do not exist on their own, but rather as a result of overlapping systems of oppression that create layers of privilege and inequity. Our values and work are centered on creating systemic changes to end hunger. At PHFO, we do not seek to just feed our neighbors; we seek our shared liberation from systems of oppression, such as racism, classism, cissexism, and other forms of violence, which will allow all to thrive.

Currently, 1 in 10 Oregonians are food insecure<sup>1</sup>. Even before the pandemic, college student food insecurity rates were higher than that of the general population. Pre-COVID, data reflected that 41% of college students had experienced food insecurity<sup>2</sup>, with BIPOC students experiencing hunger at a rate nearly double that of white students. In 2019, 50% of Oregon's Community College students with children were food insecure<sup>3</sup>.

Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon has been working to address food insecurity on college campuses since 2018 when a group of students at the University of Oregon reached out to us asking for support to help address essential need insecurities that they were experiencing while attending college. Since then, Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon has provided resource training and support to students, and administrators, at Oregon

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<sup>1</sup> Mark Edwards, *Oregon's Pandemic Food Insecurity Rate (2019-2021)*

[https://liberalarts.oregonstate.edu/sites/liberalarts.oregonstate.edu/files/2022-11/oregon\\_food\\_insecurity\\_rates\\_2019-2021.pdf](https://liberalarts.oregonstate.edu/sites/liberalarts.oregonstate.edu/files/2022-11/oregon_food_insecurity_rates_2019-2021.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Hope Center, *2019 Oregon Community College #RealCollege Survey*. Updated April 2020.

[https://hope4college.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/2019\\_OregonCC\\_Report\\_v2.pdf](https://hope4college.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/2019_OregonCC_Report_v2.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Hope Center, *2019 Oregon Community College #RealCollege Survey*. Updated April 2020.

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community colleges and universities across the state of Oregon. In 2021, we were part of the coalition that helped shape the language for [HB 2835](#), the Benefits Navigator Bill. We have worked closely with the Benefits Navigator Consortia over the past two years to provide training on Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) access and outreach by supporting cross-campus outreach coordination, targeted messaging, and increasing understanding of student eligibility.

While we have seen an improvement in benefits access for students, we know that there are numerous other barriers that students face. Rising tuition and fees tied with the rising cost of housing and food has resulted in students having to choose between succeeding in the classroom and having food on their plate. HB 3089 is the logical next step in investing in Oregon's students of Higher Education. This bill provides the systems-level change that would go a long way in supporting students across the state, ensuring they have access to the benefits and support systems they are eligible for and deserve. Connecting students to benefits that address basic needs insecurity can increase skills training, college completion, and the attainment of credentials needed for careers that offer economic mobility.

Now is the time for Oregon to invest in our students of Higher Education by passing HB 3089.

Thank you for your time.

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<https://oregonhunger.org/hunger-free-campuses/>