



To: House Committee on Higher Education
From: Imagine Black
Re: Support for HB 3089
Date: February 7, 2023

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

My name is Danita Harris; I am the Deputy Director of Movement Building with Imagine Black Futures, a community-driven organization envisioning a world where people of African descent enjoy the rights, resources, and recognition to be a thriving, resilient, and connected community. I am writing in support of HB 3089, which would create an incentive program to send funding to public colleges and universities that address student hunger on Campus.

Currently, 1 in 10 Oregonians is food insecure. Even before the pandemic, college student food insecurity rates were higher than the general population's. Pre-COVID, data reflected that 41% of college students had experienced food insecurity², with Black Indigenous and other students of color 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. In the fall of 2020, 38% of students in 2-year colleges and 29% at 4-year colleges experienced food insecurity in the past 30 days. Roughly 1.5 million college students receive SNAP, and many more students could benefit from it but face eligibility and enrollment difficulties.

The fact is expensive housing, transportation, textbook, healthcare, and other living expenses, coupled with the rising cost of tuition, have created significant financial obstacles for college students, particularly those from non-traditional backgrounds. The students facing the most tremendous hardships are those from low-income backgrounds, those who are undocumented, those who have children, first-generation college students, and former foster youth.

Eight states have formally passed the Hunger-Free Campus Bill: California, New Jersey, Maryland, Minnesota, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Oklahoma, and Louisiana. The Hunger Free Campus should not be seen as a new program or reinventing the wheel and is not a new mandate from state governments. The Hunger Free Campus Bill is a capacity/impact builder. It allows every institution of higher education to pinpoint the programs and solutions that work best for their student body and grow the impact of those targeted programs. Built with flexibility in mind, the Hunger Free Campus Bill has been created with the understanding that each campus community knows the unique challenges of their communities and are leaders in addressing those challenges.

Thank you,
Danita Harris, Deputy Director of Movement Building
Imagine Black