

Submitter: Luke McCullough
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Higher Education
Measure: HB3121

Chair Lively, Vice Chair Ruiz, Vice Chair McIntire, and members of the House Higher Education Committee,

My name is Luke McCullough, I am a third-year student at the University of Oregon, and I am writing today in support of HB 3121 with the -1 Amendment that shall help foster critical investments in Open Oregon Educational Resources, Oregon's statewide textbook affordability program.

As an in-state resident and a child of two degree-holding parents, I have been privileged with a system of financial support throughout my time in college, one which includes having a lower tuition rate than out-of-state residents and receiving some financial assistance from my parents. With that being said, I still find myself juggling school and housing expenses, and this has forced me to pick up additional work shifts when I can, skip out on certain school-related conventions, and seek courses that require little to no extra fees outside of general tuition. In the past, I have paid upwards of \$200 for course-mandated textbooks and materials that served little purpose after I completed the courses that the materials were designed for. The cost of textbooks at the University of Oregon has required me to forgo other day-to-day expenses, and I can only imagine what this same situation might look like for non-resident students that are not as financially privileged as me.

I recognize that the Open Oregon Educational Resources Statewide Textbook Affordability Program has been a fruitful player in removing access barriers in higher education, and saving students money on textbooks and related course materials. Increasing funding for this statewide program would be, in the long term, an incredible benefit to not only students, but to the staff and instructors that teach and work with students, as it would allow students to be more present in classes and encourage interest in a greater array of class types. Not to mention, expanding no-cost and low-cost course materials may ease the aforementioned juggling of day-to-day expenses—of rent, housing utilities, and food—for Oregon college students, especially those from marginalized backgrounds. Since 2015, grants created by Open Oregon Educational Resource have saved Oregon students roughly \$17 million, and this number would be set to increase dramatically with the approval of HB 3121. Students need this bill.

Thank you for taking the time to hear my concerns, and I hope that I can count on your support of HB 3121 with the -1 Amendment.

Sincerely,

Luke McCullough