

March 21, 2023

Representative John Lively, Chair
 House Committee on Higher Education
 Oregon State Capitol
 900 Court Street NE
 Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: House bill: 3565

Dear Chair Lively and Members of the House Committee on Higher Education:

I write on behalf of Oregon Community Foundation (OCF) to urge your support for on-going funding and support for the Oregon Tribal Student Grant. The Tribal community has faced some of the largest disparities in accessing higher education and the Tribal Student Grant is a significant step in mitigating that disparity.

Throughout OCF's 50-year history, we have seen the impact that focused scholarship and financial aid dollars can have on addressing critical affordability barriers for students who face the opportunity gap. OCF's own \$12 million scholarship program awards significant dollars to students who have historically been marginalized from the education system. Several of our longest running scholarships are focused on Tribal students because our donors, board, and staff see the importance of targeting dollars to this population.

The establishment of the Tribal Student Grant in 2022 was a significant step, but it was a one-time investment. A long-term commitment is needed to this program to maintain the trust and relationships that have been built with the nine tribes, to support the current grant recipients to completion, and to make a sustained effort to increase the number of Tribal students who are supported to attain a degree or certificate in our state. This could ensure an enduring change in the economic trajectory for many Oregon tribal students and their families.

We greatly appreciate the Committee's attention to the Tribal Student Grant and are available to help as it moves through the process and into implementation.

Sincerely,



Belle Cantor
 Senior Program Officer, Education

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