

Submitter: Deby McDowell

On Behalf Of: Clackamas Community College

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Education

Measure: HB5025

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Dear Co-Chairs McLain and Fredrick, members of the committee,

For the record my name is Deby McDowell and I am an administrative assistant working with community college students in the Industrial Technology department and have worked the last eight years as a WIOA Workforce Advisor at Clackamas Community College.

Our students right now are facing many barriers to obtain the job skills needed to find employment that will provide a livable wage. Those barriers are of personal, financial and emotional obstacles or challenges that prevent them to attend school and fully participate in training. For example, affordable housing, yes, they waive the deposits and the rent is lower, but they still need to work full time to meet their monthly living expenses. They can apply for financial aid, but I have witnessed many that have been awarded financial aid funds and have had to drop out due the outside factors. Then they are left with a loan they have no way to pay back.

The college offers a first-year student experience course that offers these students one on one coaching through some of these obstacles, but the class is not free and the students just can't take on the extra expense of a course that is not related to a certificate for a degree. If we have the funding available to offer this class as wrap around support service, I believe this would truly benefit our struggling students by supporting them with one on one coaching and referrals to community support.

Lower enrollment and decreased revenue do not mean that our students' needs have also diminished. In fact, due to the pandemic we have seen the needs of our students dramatically increase. I can attest to the fact that more and more of our students do not have a family support system to help guide them through the college experience. Therefore, every dollar cut from the community college support fund directly affects the students, with higher tuition, reduced access to technology, and less staff to assist them, in order to truly support our students for the next two years, we need a Community College Support Fund of \$855 million.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Deby McDowell