

Submitter: Ethan Sharygin

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Education

Measure: HB5025

I am testifying today as the Director of the Population Research Center at Portland State University in support of PSU's budget request. PSU generates numerous benefits for the state. It is an urban university that serves thousands of students from communities that are underrepresented in higher education. It is also an incubator for new theoretical and applied research that helps propel Oregon's economic engine.

PSU has hired a new President and is also recruiting for a new Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies. The next biennium will be an exciting time as these leaders set a course for the institution and solid financial backing from the state will enable them to focus on long-term initiatives to make PSU financially sustainable and to flourish.

The Population Research Center produces annual population estimates that are used to distribute state funds from a variety of taxes and fees, and for other diverse purposes, for example to estimate COVID-19 vaccination rates, the aging population, and population at risk from natural disasters. PRC faculty also produce long-run population projections, which inform land use decisions and regional housing needs.

State targeted funds for census and population research enable the Population Research Center to serve state agencies, local governments, and the public with accurate and timely data for appropriating state funds and setting public policies.

As socioeconomic and demographic data becomes more integrated into policymaking, demands for our expertise and data are also increasing. Portland's population growth has stalled since 2020-- and more and more requests are coming in to understand how and why Oregon's population is changing.

PSU offers the only graduate level demographic training program in Oregon, and many of our graduates go on to distinguished careers in Oregon state and local government or as community leaders. We also provide fellowships to PSU students and bring talented new faculty to become Oregonians.

I believe we could do much more if we could offer faculty more stable employment and competitive salaries, and offer more scholarships to underrepresented students interested in studying demography.

For these reasons, I support PSU's budget request for the full current support level. Thank you to the committee members for their support of higher education in Oregon

and for their work and time on this committee.