

Submitter: Timothy Krause
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 Timothy Krause. I am a faculty member at Portland Community College, and I am submitting written testimony in support of HB 3121 with the -1 Amendment that will help make critical investments in Open Oregon Educational Resources, Oregon's statewide textbook affordability program.

As an instructor of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), the impact of open educational materials (OER) is very clear to me. My students are immigrants and refugees who depend upon the language classes we offer in order to improve their lives and become productive, engaged citizens. However, like many other students, their situations are fragile and even the cost of one commercial textbook is often a barrier to learning English and continuing their education. The cost of commercial textbooks is unaffordable for many students and sometimes ends up more than the cost of tuition itself. When this happens, students are unable to continue.

However, I have also seen first-hand the impact of Open Oregon Educational Resources (OOER). It has affected both my students and me directly. Through the support of OOER, I have been able to replace all of my commercial textbooks with free OER materials. This has had an exponential effect as the one-time investment of materials development is now amortized across numerous students every term, every year. In fact, a small upfront allocation is often returned in the very first course the materials are used. For example, a teacher may receive a grant of \$750 to adopt a new OER that replaces a \$60 commercial textbook. If one teacher uses that textbook for one term with 30 students, it has already more than paid back the state's investment and then some. But that's only one classroom. This effect is then doubled, tripled, or more when other instructors at PCC – as well as those at other institutions all around the state – also adopt these free materials, greatly expanding the impact of this program again and again over the lifetime of the OER materials.

While the cost savings to students is real, another important aspect of OER that is not as well known is that it has actually improved my teaching and therefore the education of my students. Commercial textbooks are one-size-fits-all and were designed for the lowest common denominator across the country or the world; they are not designed to serve the specific needs of our students in our state. They are fixed publications that cannot be easily or quickly changed. OER, on the other hand,

is a flexible product that better meets the needs of our students in terms of not only content, but also accessibility. It can be updated whenever necessary, and the variety of forms that OER can take also makes it easier for students to use across a range of platforms rather than relying solely on a printed book or a publisher's website. And when teachers like me are empowered to prepare our own materials, we make sure that every bit matters, as we know how precious the time and money of our students really are. In other words, the motivation behind OER is all about education, not profit.

It's for these reasons – and many more – that I believe in open educational resources. They have changed the way I teach, and they have increased access to higher-quality education for my students.

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