

Support for HB 3121

Testimony for the Joint Committee On Ways and Means

April 8, 2023

Co-Chair Steiner, Co-Chair Sanchez, and members of the Joint Committee On Ways and Means, for the record, my name is Amy Hofer, Statewide Open Education Program Director with Open Oregon Educational Resources.

Our program promotes textbook affordability for community college and university students, and facilitates widespread adoption of open, low-cost, high-quality materials. HB 3121, which passed the House Higher Education Committee, increases the continuing service level of our program budget in alignment with the Joint Task Force on Student Success Affordability Work Group recommendation. I want to tell you about what we do and I hope that you will support this bill too.

Since Oregon started investing in textbook affordability in 2015, we have seen measurable success, including over \$17M in student savings from our grant program¹ and a steep reduction in the cost of course materials for transfer degrees and general education requirements.² Our evidence shows that support for affordable course materials is effective and high-impact because spending on textbook affordability has a multiplier effect such that each dollar in state funding spent continues to generate student savings year after year.

There are many ways to address high textbook costs. We focus on open educational resources (OER), which are available free online or in print at low cost. Open educational resources solve the affordability problem for students and afford faculty the academic freedom to completely customize their course materials.

¹ [Continuing Savings from Past OER Grants \(Second Report\)](#) and [Fall 2022 OER Grant Update](#)

² [Six Years of Community College Cost Savings: Impact of statewide funding for textbook affordability](#) and [Two Year Followup: Course material costs for four-year degrees at Oregon's universities](#)

Oregon currently *under*-invests in textbook affordability. HB 3121 would result directly in accelerated student savings through grant awards and stipends for faculty. We would also be able to increase our work on large-scale projects ensuring that materials are not just affordable, but also high quality: relevant, aligned with course outcomes, accessible, and designed with an equity lens.

I hope that you will support Oregon's textbook affordability program by voting yes on the funding increase in HB 3121.