

April 26, 2023

RE: House Bill 3120

Dear Co-Chairs Sanchez and Steiner and the Joint Committee on Ways and Means,

For the record, my name is Claire Tuquero and I am a student at Simmons University and a graduate of Aloha High School. I'm writing to urge your support of House Bill 3120, which would establish a \$5 million competitive grant fund to be managed by the Higher Education Coordinating Commission in support of college access and success programs like College Possible.

College Possible was recommended to me by my counselor when I was a sophomore. Now that I am in college, I am proud to say that this program greatly increased my knowledge of the college admissions and financial aid process. Prior to joining College Possible, I was deemed as a college-bound student ever since I was young. I had good grades and the desire to pursue endeavors such as a masters or doctorate degree in a health or science field, medical research, and study abroad. However, I had zero knowledge on how to navigate the college process. Both of my parents had attended college in the Philippines and had experienced a completely different process than the one in the US.

In addition, I was actually turned down by college prep programs, such as AVID, in the past, since I was seen as a student that was already set to go to college, when in reality, I had no mentor to guide me and provide the right knowledge that would lead me to success after graduation. College Possible has been the program that fulfilled all of those needs and beyond. My favorite memory with College Possible was attending the student information session that they held for prospective students. I was greeted by numerous College Possible coaches throughout the Portland Metro Area who kindly welcomed me with positive attitudes. Every adult that I have encountered in this program, including one of my college coaches, Rose Jay, has reinforced the fact that this program truly cares for each of their students.

Ultimately, College Possible breaks down aspects of the college admissions process-- from test prep, to the common application, to financial aid-- and they simplify it through lessons that occur each month. In addition, coaches provide 1-on-1 sessions where students can discuss virtually any questions that they have. On top of everything, we constantly receive scholarship notifications and college prep programs that most students are unaware of. In conclusion, College Possible is such a valuable resource for students beyond the traditional stereotypes who seek this type of guidance. This program has helped students like me who have parents that have attended college in foreign countries as well, which increases the amount of students who would benefit from this program. Overall, College Possible has boosted my confidence of being able to pursue and succeed in a post-secondary education, and I hope that it can provide this guidance to many more students to come.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my story with you today.