

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 Vincent Truong and a student at University of Portland and a graduate of McDaniel 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.

As a low-income student from the Portland Metro Area, access to information about college is a luxury my parents didn't have. My father graduated from a community college with an associate's degree and my mother graduated high school. With only one source of income, my parents raised my family on a sufficient, but humble living. Luckily, during my junior year of high school, my older sister introduced me to College Possible. Since my sister is a grade higher than me, she told me about the different opportunities that she could've taken in her senior year.

As soon as I heard about College Possible, I asked the junior coach about registering. Even though I had missed the deadline, she said that there might be another chance to join. She invited me to group sessions with other students from the same grade, and although I wasn't an official College Possible student, I attended all of the group sessions that were required.

Fortunately, I was able to become an official member of College Possible. My junior coach didn't recruit me because of my academic achievements, but because of my integrity. Participating during optional meetings spoke louder than words; it proved my desire to prepare for college. Preparing for college happens throughout high school, but knowing what to do with the preparations happens in senior year. During my senior year of high school, I got a phone call from my senior coach. Through phone calls and 1-1 meetings with my senior coach, we worked through the FAFSA, scholarships, and college applications. Before I joined College Possible, I had no place to direct my future, and not having a plan isn't a pleasant situation.

No matter how much time I have, knowing what to do with my time is also important. Being gifted with a lot of time doesn't always create progress. In College Possible, I was taught that time is precious. For example, thanks to my coach, I completed the FAFSA on the same day it opened. Fortunately, as I applied to colleges, University of Portland sent an acceptance letter and a financial aid letter that rewarded me with their Presidential Scholarship. The scholarship and the FAFSA covered most of my college tuition from the University of Portland. As a low-income student, having that letter wouldn't be possible without my coach.

Regardless of achievements, my coach didn't just help me with preparations for college, but also taught me to keep trying. No matter how many hardships I encounter from college applications and scholarships, she kept motivating me to keep going - to keep trying because in the end, it's better to know that I've tried my best than knowing that I haven't tried at all.

Thank you for your time and I hope that my story measures the amount of support that I've received from College Possible.

Sincerely,
Vincent Truong