

Submitter: Geof Garner

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Higher Education

Measure: HB4163

Good afternoon, Chair Rep Lively and the members of the House Committee On Higher Education. I am

Geof Garner, Past President, of the Northwest Association of Educational Opportunity Programs. (NAEOP) is one of 10 TRIO Leadership regions across the United States. NAEOP includes the states of Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington.

I am writing on behalf of the Oregon TRIO Association (OTA), a non-profit organization committed to providing wrap-around services and support to low-income and first-generation students across Oregon through Federal TRIO grants. Oregon's 55 TRIO programs serve over 11,000 students annually and have over 50 years of proven success in helping students improve their lives through education. TRIO programs work with a wide range of students, ranging from middle school to adult college learners, to remove barriers for our underrepresented students. These programs ensure that our students have equitable career opportunities and successfully navigate our education system to contribute to our future workforce.

Over the last two biennium budgets, the Oregon legislature has committed to funding community-based organizations working with underrepresented populations to promote college access and completion. This non-profit exists to help support the TRIO programs in Oregon through additional resources for staff and students, collaborating with other state organizations to maximize our efforts to serve underrepresented students. Additionally, OTA seeks to expand the number of federal TRIO grants awarded in Oregon. OTA has successfully expanded access to TRIO programs in Oregon and secured over \$2.5 million in new annual funding from the Federal Budget, adding ten new TRIO programs in Oregon since 2021.

Our long-term vision is to see dozens of new TRIO programs added to Oregon, resulting in millions of annual dollars to provide sustained support for the communities that need it most. To achieve this, we are seeking support from the state to help sustain these efforts. OTA does not receive federal funding, as those awards are provided to individual grantees to facilitate each program around our state. However, there is a clear return on investment by supporting OTA. State funding can be leveraged to create additional grants, increase federal funding into Oregon, create new jobs, and, most importantly, serve additional students.

I invite you to support HB 4163

HB 4163: Requires the Higher Education Coordinating Commission to establish a grant program for the purpose of supporting organizations to expand the scope and community reach of college access and success programs.

Sincerely,

Geof Garner
Past President NAEOP
TRIO Programs Director MESD
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