

Submitter: Miriam Garland
On Behalf Of: Western Oregon University
Committee: House Committee On Higher Education
Measure: HB4162

Chair Lively, Vice Chair Ruiz, Vice Chair McIntire, and members of the House Higher Education Committee,

My name is Miriam Garland, and I am a fourth year at Western Oregon University. I am submitting testimony in support of HB 4162: The Student Emergency Needs Package, which will make critical investments in basic needs programming and affordable textbooks for students across Oregon. I want to thank those who have made previously funded resources available for myself and my peers and to consider the following.

Since 2021 I have had involvement with the Stitch Closet, which provides free clothing for all seasons at Western Oregon University. As of June in 2022 I have worked as a part of Western Oregon University's Basic Needs Team, working with Maria Barrera, the Basic Needs Coordinator. The Basic Needs Coordinator position housed in Abby's House, the Center for Equity and Gender Justice, uses a trauma informed lens to provide support and assistance to WOU students who are impacted by but not limited to: homelessness, housing insecurity, food and financial insecurity. Maria has an extensively wide range of resources to ensure students are aware of all benefits and resources available to them, provide culturally specific resources for prospective and current students and their families and support students in applying for these benefits.

I will share with you some 2023 statistics from the Food Pantry for the month of May. In the month of May, we were able to serve a total of 371 households. Out of the households we served in May, 193 of them were student households and 18 households were of WOU Staff or Faculty. For a small college town of Monmouth, with the Food Pantry having student-ran hours within our location in our university, these statistics show that there is a great number of underserved individuals who without these resources would not be able to contribute to the community like they have. In this academic year, our essential resources have been even more necessary, with more students utilizing our resources at the Basic Needs Space and through council with Maria. Basic needs navigators, especially those at smaller institutions and in rural areas, cannot best serve our students without programmatic budgets.

Thank you for your time, and I hope that I can count on your support of HB 4162: The Student Emergency Needs Package. Students cannot afford to wait!

Miriam Garland
Western Oregon University
they/she