

Good Afternoon Members of the Committee,

Chloè Webster: My name is Chloé Webster, and I am the Student Body President at the University of Oregon. I am here today, representing not only University of Oregon students, but college students across the State of Oregon as a member of the Oregon Student Association.

Carissa O'Donnell: Hi everyone, my name is Carissa O'Donnell, and I currently serve as the Student Body President at Oregon State University. Today, as you may have already witnessed, over 150 students and advocates from universities across Oregon have assembled at the Capitol to support higher education and the student experience at Oregon's public universities. I am here today, alongside my colleague Chloè, to express the beneficial and statewide effects the passage of HB 4162: The Student Emergency Needs Package will have.

Chloè Webster: Students struggle to pay for food, housing, and textbooks, on top of increasing tuition. I have friends working two, three, four jobs to cover their rent and get maybe three meals into their bodies each day. Do you think that a student working multiple jobs has time to dive into their learning, scrambling to turn in assignments between shifts?

Chloè Webster: And then we're stuck playing a guessing game for textbooks. Students pay hundreds of dollars out of pocket because these are costs that financial aid won't cover. At the University of Oregon, we have a Textbook Subsidy through our Basic Needs Program that offers \$150 - \$300 in support until the funds run out. In the Fall term, the applications closed within twelve hours. This term, it took two days from the start of classes before we had to turn students away. And I say we because this program is funded through the Student Government. ASUO funds UO's Basic Needs program with around \$1 million dollars a year entirely with student dollars through our incidental fee. Last year, the Basic Needs Program served 3,769 different students which is over 20% of our students in Eugene. It is disheartening that student dollars are subsidizing student needs.

Carissa O'Donnell: UO's story is not unlike that of OSU's, or any of the other public universities you will hear from today. In the next fiscal year, The associated students of Oregon State University will be allocating approximately \$1.5 million dollars- or \$65 per student a year- in student fees to our Basic Needs center, a resource with increasing demand that is difficult for us to keep pace with, as keeping pace would mean increasing the fees students pay in order to fund such services. It seems a cruel irony that in order to support students utilizing our basic needs center- which is approximately one in three students on our campus- we also require them to pay higher and higher fees in order to receive such assistance. It is a tough balancing act for us, as I am acutely aware it is for you.

Carissa O'Donnell: We are here today to express how impactful and invaluable this funding would be for students, and students recognize the decisions you will be making in this session. I hope that the stories you hear today will prompt further discussion, consideration, and exploration in regards to supporting students- as we are eagerly seeking your investment in our academic ambitions.

Carissa O'Donnell: It is not everyday you see a beaver and a duck on the same team, or even the same athletic conference, but the students of Oregon are worth it, and together we represent over 60,000 of them.

Chloè Webster: Thank you for your time. I sincerely hope that we can count on your support of HB 4162: The Student Emergency Needs Package.