

Submitter: Brent King  
On Behalf Of: Myself and 4 potential Oregon grads  
Committee: Senate Committee On Education  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB604

Hello. I would like to encourage everyone to support SB 604. Funding for higher education has been decreasing over multiple years. However, the demand for a college degree just to gain entry level employment has increased. This has created an environment where students are having a harder time transitioning to higher education. The resources they have reliably had access to in the past are not going nearly as far as they used to, but they are forced to attend university by the demands of the market. If a person has only a high school diploma, trade school degree, or associates degree, jobs that will provide a living wage are simply not as available as they once were. Programs that support first-year students help colleges retain the students by creating extra scaffolding for the new students to rely on. If Oregon is not able to turn the tied on our current problems with retention of students in higher education, then we will not have citizens who can afford our comparatively high housing rates, nor our increasing cost of living. We risk entering a cycle of "brain drain" where other states, who offer supports that we may not, can attract Oregon high school graduates. As an example, my own daughter selected to attend university outside of Oregon because she was able to receive a much higher rate of state and institutional based financial support by going elsewhere. Oregon schools could not compete with the offers made outside of Oregon.