

Chair Hudson, Vice Chairs Fragala and Harbick, and members of the committee,

My name is Kevin Moore, OER coordinator for Mt. Hood Community College. I am writing in support of HB 3182 and HB 3183: The Student Basic Needs and Workforce Stabilization Act. I believe this act will make important investments in student basic needs initiatives, affordable student housing initiatives, and textbook affordability.

I have been a librarian in community colleges in Oregon since 2007. Over the years I have worked with students from a variety of backgrounds, helping them develop their information literacy skills and become better researchers. I have seen the benefits access to information can offer to a student's academic performance and in achieving their dreams. At the same time, I have also seen the struggles students face to make ends meet, and the obstacles that food insecurity, housing instability, and rising textbook costs put in the way of their education.

Last year MHCC Textbook Affordability, Analytics and Institutional Research, and the Associated Students of MHCC conducted a survey of students to assess how the rising cost of living and textbooks has affected their academic performance and college career. The results showed that our efforts to reduce — or eliminate through OER — textbook costs have improved student enrollment in No Cost and Low Cost labeled courses. However, students continue to report having to choose between buying a textbook or paying rent, or a utility bill, or simply food. They also report having to enroll in fewer courses, prolonging their time in college (thus delaying their completion of their degree program and entrance into their chosen field), or dropping out altogether due to rising costs in their basic needs and textbooks.

In my role as OER coordinator for the college, I regularly talk with faculty and students who attest to the need for reducing (or eliminating altogether) costs for textbooks. Instructors see their students struggling, falling behind or dropping out, so they welcome any opportunity to offset textbook costs with affordable or free alternatives like open textbooks, book scholarships, course reserves and other programs. Students express relief when they learn a course is free of textbook costs. State-sponsored programs like the Open Oregon Education Resources grants and stipends support our faculty in their efforts to provide students with affordable and free textbooks and other learning materials. Since 2015 MHCC faculty participation in Open Oregon sponsored OER development programming has saved our students \$3,193,366.00 in textbook costs — that is, for every dollar spent on these programs, Oregon saves students an estimated \$22.00.

Such a return on investment can be seen in more than just monetary terms. Community college students enter the workforce as nurses, programmers, educators, entrepreneurs, artists, first responders, and other professionals serving vital roles in enriching our economy, our culture, and our communities. Oregon cannot afford to lose these skills and talents for lack of investment.

Thank you for your time, and I hope that I can count on your support of HB 3182 and HB 3183: The Student Basic Needs and Workforce Stabilization Act.

Sincerely,

Kevin Moore

OER Reference Specialist

Mt. Hood Community College