

Submitter: Ken Thrasher  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5006

Co-Chairs Lieber and Sanchez; Vice Co-Chairs Gomberg, Smith and Girod; and  
Ways and Means Committee Members-

My name is Ken Thrasher, and I am the Founding Board member of College Possible Oregon (CPO), who helped bring the program to Oregon 13 years ago. As I watched today's testimony by CPO Alumni, students and staff I couldn't be prouder of what has been accomplished, in part with many years of much appreciated legislative support. We started with 130 High School Junior students 13 years ago, and today serve about 2,000 students, including in rural Oregon.

I have watched CPO grow from a college access program to a college graduation program, and in the last five years to really helping college graduates launch their careers. It's been an amazing journey that legislator's like yourselves helped us shape by also emphasizing and supporting CPO's rural school expansion. Your support is more critical than ever through funding HB 2997, and we are asking for your support. Support of HB 2997 is one of the ways to increase enrollment rates in the post-secondary education system, which are too low in Oregon.

CPO is somewhat unique in that we take students from the Junior year of High School to career, generally a six to eight year journey with wonderful near-peer mentors with them all the way. CPO's results have seen a significant number of our students transition from high school to post-secondary education—community college and bachelors granting universities, continue to persist in their pathway at nearly 90%, and graduate at rates more than double the average of their peers.

What makes this work so important? These young people are representative of our State, have strong academic and workforce aspirations, and have in many cases overcome barriers in their quest for meeting their career goals. I believe in the concept of return on investment (ROI), and CPO has shown how a student-focused program can create both an individual and collective impact on human capital and workforce preparation, with an excellent ROI on its work. Please include HB 2997 in the 2025-27 funded budget. Thank you,

Ken Thrasher  
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