

April 16, 2025

Joint Committee on Ways and Means

Re: HB 5006 – Support

Co-Chairs Lieber and Sanchez, and members of the committee,

My name is Elizabeth McMurtry, I am a resident of Multnomah county, a public employee at Portland State University, a proud union member of PSU-AAUP, a former organizer with the IBEW, and a member of the environmentalist organization Portland Rising Tide.

I am testifying today to ask you to prioritize protecting Oregonians and our immediate needs in your state budget, including funding desperately needed for higher education and student basic needs.

In the national chapter of my union, the American Association of University Professors, the call has been clear that we must not engage in what has been called *anticipatory obedience*. We must not follow along with the cuts happening at the federal level, which are causing chaos, job loss, higher prices, and economic instability. We must not be meek in our response but strong, cohesive, and united; we must prioritize the common good and the shoring up of our communities.

Now is the time for us to show bravery and strength, to act boldly, not timidly.

Some of the ways you might do this are easy and straightforward. As you build the state budget, we the working class, the vast and disproportionately large category of your constituents, call on you to reject any new Oregon tax breaks for corporations or the ultra-wealthy. Do not give up revenue that working people need. Do not make unnecessary cuts based on speculations about what the federal government might do; do not try to curry favor with Elon Musk and the billionaire class via tax breaks that sacrifice the critical basic services Oregonians rely on.

Instead, prioritize the Public University Support Fund. Prioritize the Community College Support Fund. Prioritize House Bill 3182 and 3183, The Student Basic Needs Act. Prioritize spending that impacts people's basic needs and the direct improvement of their lives and their future opportunities. Remember that a rising tide carries all ships.

We ask you to remember that draconian austerity measures *never* work. They exacerbate harm and do not create the stability from which we can emerge stronger together. Any potential economic downturn or federal funding reductions are best tempered by doing what we know works to keep families stable: strategically investing in our communities and giving Oregonians more opportunities to thrive.

Please prioritize a state budget which protects Oregonians rather than adding to the chaos. Thank you.

Elizabeth McMurtry  
VP of Legislative and Political Action, PSU-AAUP