

Testimony in Support of HB 5006

Joint Committee On Ways and Means

April 16th, 2025

Co-Chairs, Vice Co-Chairs, and Members of the Committee,

łaxayam. Justin nayka nim pi nayka Shawash-Ili?i-tilixam.

My name is Justin Fasana and I am a member of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde and a current recipient of the Oregon Tribal Student Grant. I am submitting this testimony to support the Higher Education Coordinating Commission's budget, specifically as it relates to the Oregon Tribal Student Grant.

I am currently in a Master's Program for Natural resources and urban forestry and was a first time recipient of the Tribal Student Grant last term. Living in Oregon is getting less affordable everyday, and this grant has allowed me to pursue my educational and career goals while still living close to my family and Tribe. Family and culture are my most important values. My pursuit of higher education is driven by my desire to help my family and culture continue to grow, similar to how people like my grandfather helped it grow from almost nothing.

After my Tribe's federal status was terminated in 1954, we had very little access to supportive services. Thanks to the dedication of my family and community, we have managed to get back on our feet and have since been restored as a federally recognized Tribe. Continuing this momentum is a life goal of mine. Support from sources like the Tribal Student Grant make this possible. This funding allows myself, as well as my peers across all tribes in Oregon, to continue growing a historically underserved population.

Funding this budget also supports higher education institutions in Oregon. The current state of federal funding is uncertain and our state's educational institutions need support now more than ever. Thank you for reading and I ask again that you support students like me and the Oregon Tribal Student Grant by supporting the Higher Education Coordinating Commission's budget.

**Sincerely,
Justin Fasana**