



**SENATOR MARK HASS**  
DISTRICT 14 - BEAVERTON  
CHAIR, SENATE EDUCATION &  
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

## NEWS ADVISORY

March 11, 2014

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**‘Oregon Promise’ bill to be signed by Governor Kitzhaber**  
*SB 1524 authorizes study of free community college for Oregon high school grads*

PORTLAND—Today at 1:00 PM Governor John Kitzhaber will sign legislation known as the ‘Oregon Promise’, Senate Bill 1524, into law. The bill signing will take place at Portland Community College Rock Creek Event Center in advance of a Joint Meeting of the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) and the Oregon Education Investment Board (OEIB).

In February the Oregon Senate and House voted to approve the study of a concept to provide free community college to Oregon high school graduates. Senate Bill 1524 directs the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) to examine the possibility of opening the doors of community college to high school graduates without requiring them to pay tuition or fees.

The concept for free community college, dubbed the “Oregon Promise,” would extend two years of free community college education to students. Within that two-year time period, students could obtain an Associate’s degree, a certificate of learning, or earn credits that can transfer towards a Bachelor’s degree at a four-year university. If the HECC finds the concept feasible for implementation, the commission will propose criteria to the Oregon Legislature later this year.

Currently, Oregon community college students pay an average of nearly \$4,000 per year in tuition and fees. That price tag serves as a barrier for Oregonians who cannot afford higher education. For those who do enroll, many end up with student loan debt.

WHAT: Oregon Promise – Community College for Oregon High School Graduates –Bill Signing

WHO: Senator Mark Hass (D-Beaverton), Governor John Kitzhaber, Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) and the Oregon Education Investment Board (OEIB), Portland Community College President Jeremy Brown

WHEN: Tuesday, March 11 at 1:00 PM

WHERE: PCC Rock Creek, Event Center, 17705 NW Springville Road Portland, OR 97229

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