PRESS RELEASE
OREGON HOUSE DEMOCRATS

Record Higher Education Funding Passes Oregon House

Legislation includes substantial increases, direct student aid

SALEM – A record $2.2 billion budget to support community colleges and public universities passed the Oregon House of Representatives today. It includes a significant increase in Oregon's need-based financial aid program, the Oregon Promise Grant, that will help 2,500 more students afford to go to college.

House Bill 5024 specifically allocates $836.9 million for public universities in Oregon, nearly $60 million above current service levels, and $641 million for community colleges, $50 million above current service levels.

"After starting the session unsure where this budget would end up, I am thrilled to be here today, with the state making serious investments in our colleges and universities," said Rep. Susan McLain (D-Forest Grove), co-chair of the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education. "We have to be doing everything we can to ensure we have a quality and affordable higher education system. This budget is an important step in making that happen."

The budget also provides direct student support. This includes an 8.2 percent increase above current service levels for the Oregon Opportunity Grant, and $40 million for the Oregon Promise Grant, a financial aid program for recent Oregon high school graduates or GED-completors who plan to attend community college. Outdoor School will receive $45.3 million.

"We should be proud that we were able to advocate for such a strong higher education budget this legislative session," said Rep. Mark Meek (D-Oregon City), a member of the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education. "While there is still more work for us to do in future sessions in ensuring strong and stable funding, this budget puts us on the right track."

The bill, which passed 55 to 4, now goes to the Oregon Senate for consideration.

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