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College Access and Affordability Gets Boost with Legislation that Passes Oregon House

Tackles textbook costs and ensures access for foster children

SALEM – Two bills to increase higher education access and affordability passed the Oregon House of Representatives today. The legislation seeks to reduce the cost of textbooks and ensure current and former foster children have access to higher education.

“The cost of a college education is a barrier for too many in our state,” said Rep. Courtney Neron (D-Wilsonville). “As legislators, we have to do everything we can to tackle this challenge.”

[House Bill 2213](#) requires community colleges and public universities in Oregon to establish a textbook affordability plan. Each plan must contain a number of measurable goals through the establishment of student savings or the requirement that a certain number of courses be designated low-cost or no-cost.

“Textbooks can cost students hundreds and even thousands of dollars per semester,” Rep. Doherty said. “This legislation builds on work from previous sessions, and will hopefully provide students needed transparency and cost savings.”

[House Bill 2571](#) seeks to increase access to higher education for current and former foster children under 25 years of age by changing eligibility for tuition waivers. The legislation gives those individuals who are pursuing an undergraduate degree access to the waiver if they are enrolled in courses totaling one or more credit hours.

“Foster children face so many obstacles to success. This legislation is another incremental step in leveling the playing field and ensuring they have the same opportunities that other Oregon students have,” Rep. Doherty said.

Joining Rep. Doherty as a sponsor of House Bill 2571 are Rep. Neron, Rep. Barbara Smith Warner (D-Portland), Rep. Julie Fahey (D-West Eugene and Junction City), Rep. Alissa Keny-Guyer (D-Portland) and Rep. Teresa Alonso Leon (D-Woodburn).

The legislation continues to fulfill Oregon House Democrats’ pledge to every Oregonian by making community colleges and universities more affordable.

Both passed the House unanimously and now goes to the Oregon Senate for consideration.

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