



# NEWS

Oregon Legislature - House Democratic Caucus

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## Bill to study free community college tuition wins House approval

SALEM – After earning national attention for last year's "Pay it Forward" proposal to allow free university tuition that would be paid back over time, today Oregon lawmakers approved another idea to make college more affordable.

Senate Bill 1524 would order the Higher Education Coordinating Commission to study whether it's realistic to allow Oregon high school graduates to attend community colleges for free. The bill won approval from the Oregon House of Representatives by a vote of 57-2.

"As a community college teacher for many years, I've seen firsthand how higher education helps people become empowered, employable, and engaged," said Rep. Chris Gorsek (D – Troutdale). "I'm proud of this bill and our ongoing work to make higher education more accessible and affordable for all Oregonians."

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.

Because of House amendments adding specific areas for the HECC to consider in its study of the "Oregon Promise," including anticipated number of participants and annual cost, SB 1524 now returns to the Senate for concurrence consideration.

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