



**REPRESENTATIVE MARK JOHNSON  
OREGON HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
HOUSE DISTRICT 52**

**For Immediate Release  
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**Oregon Promise Community College Program Signed Into Law By Governor Brown**

*SB 81 Will Make Higher Education More Affordable And Accessible For Oregon Students*

**Hood River, OR** – Representative Mark Johnson (R-Hood River) today joined Governor Kate Brown and other elected officials at Columbia Gorge Community College in Hood River for the ceremonial signing of Senate Bill 81, the Oregon Promise initiative that will transform higher education in Oregon by making community college more affordable and accessible for Oregon students. The bipartisan legislation, co-sponsored by Rep. Johnson, Senator Mark Hass (D-Beaverton) and Representative Tobias Read (D-Beaverton), passed both the House and Senate this past legislative session with overwhelming support and will dedicate \$10 million to provide community college tuition waivers for eligible Oregon students.

“Today represents a significant step forward in creating an affordable college experience for our youth,” said Rep. Johnson. “Removing barriers to higher education and creating pathways to long-term employment in our state’s workforce will be a huge benefit to Oregon’s economy. I thank Governor Brown and my fellow legislators for working together to make this program a reality here in Hood River and across the state.”

The Oregon Promise initiative is a “last-dollar” program, meaning eligible students would first need to apply for and accept available financial aid. Eligible students will need to meet the following criteria: be enrolled in a degree or certificate program at one of Oregon’s community colleges; be a recent graduate from a diploma or GED program; be an Oregon resident; and, achieve a 2.5 minimum grade point average (GPA) and continue academic progress. Under the program, a grant must be at least \$1,000 or the actual cost of tuition, and no more than the statewide average community college tuition. The total amount of awards is capped at \$10 million per fiscal year.

Oregon will become the second state in the nation to enact this innovative community college program. Tennessee was first, passing the policy into law a year ago. In Tennessee, 51 percent of those who signed up for free community college were eligible for Pell Grants of more than \$5,700 a year—meaning they will be enrolled in community college classes this fall in Tennessee at no cost to the state. In all, about 85 percent of those Tennessee students received full or partial grants. Tennessee has quickly become the number one state in the country in Pell Grant recipients.

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