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**NEWS RELEASE**

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**House Approves \$2.2 Billion Higher Education Opportunity Package**

**SALEM, Ore.** - Today, the House passed legislation to increase college access, affordability, and completion for all Oregonians.

Building on recommendations from the [Joint Task Force On Student Success for Underrepresented Students in Higher Education](#), the Higher Education Opportunity package would respond to the higher education affordability crisis by:

- Investing **\$800 million into the Community Colleges Support Fund** and **\$1 billion for the public university support fund ([House Bill 5025](#))**.
- **Providing over \$300 million for Oregon Opportunity Grants ([House Bill 5025](#))**. The Oregon Opportunity Grant (OOG) is Oregon's largest state-funded, need-based grant program for low-income college students. The grant is available to eligible students attending Oregon colleges and universities for up to four years at full-time enrollment.

“These grants put more than 36,000 students through college every year,” said Representative Susan McLain, Chair of the Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education. “Though not everyone chooses to go to college, everyone should have the opportunity to attend.”

- **\$24.2 million for the Oregon Tribal Student Grant program (House Bill 3565).** In 2022, the legislature took an important step forward in breaking down some of the barriers that keep Native American students from accessing higher education by standing up this program with an initial investment of \$19 million. This legislation codifies the program within the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) in order to continue providing robust support to tribal learners by ensuring **zero- or low-cost tuition.**

“With this bill, we are institutionalizing funding for Native American student success long-term,” said Representative John Lively, Chair of the House Committee on Higher Education.

Since opening the program to applicants on May 1, 2022, HECC has authorized 535 students to receive program funds, and 365 students have enrolled in higher education programs.

“Though the college affordability crisis impacts all students, we know Native American students are disproportionately affected,” said Representative Tawna Sanchez, Co-Chair of Joint Ways and Means. “According to data from HECC, only 45% of Native American students who enroll in a public university complete a bachelor’s degree within six years while 68% of all students statewide meet this same metric.”

The legislature is committed to ensuring Oregon’s high-quality higher education system is accessible to communities across the state, and ensuring it is affordable is a key part of that work.

After respective votes of 44-14 and 53-2, House Bill 5025 and 3565 will go to the Senate.

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