



SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

Oregon State Legislature
State Capitol
Salem, OR

NEWS RELEASE

June 25, 2015

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Access to Opportunity bill helps Oregon's tuition equity students attend college

SB 932 will allow more students to apply for state grants and aid

SALEM –Senate Democrats approved legislation this morning that will help Oregon students attain higher education. Senate Bill 932, the Access to Opportunity Act, will allow students eligible for Tuition Equity to also access the Oregon Opportunity Grant, Oregon's only need-based aid program.

"Getting an undergraduate degree is nearly unattainable if you are low-income and have no access to financial aid," said Senator Michael Dembrow (D-Portland), chief sponsor of the bill and a community college professor. "Senate Bill 932 will remove barriers that don't need to be there and open up a clear path to students who have been part of our system, part of our lives for a very long time. This bill will bring a new ray of hope for some very talented, hard-working young Oregonians."

In 2013, the Legislature passed Tuition Equity (HB 2787) on a bipartisan vote in both chambers. Tuition Equity allows students who meet certain requirements to pay in-state tuition at Oregon's public universities, regardless of their documentation status. Since the passage of Tuition Equity, some barriers to student access to higher education have been identified. SB 932 addresses those barriers. Under the provisions of this bill, the total number of newly eligible students is estimated at a maximum of 1,000 students per year, which will represent a 1 percent increase in applications for Oregon Opportunity Grants.

"This is a win-win opportunity for students and the state of Oregon and will improve the quality, diversity, and skill of Oregon's future workforce," said Senate Majority Leader Diane Rosenbaum (D-Portland). "This is a small policy change, but in the big picture it speaks volumes

to our commitment to students that want to build a life and career in Oregon. This is the right thing to do.”

Once signed into law, Oregon will join six other states that provide access to state financial aid for Tuition Equity students. SB 932 will now go to the House of Representatives for consideration.

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