



*The League of Women Voters of Oregon, established in 1920, is a grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.*

February 20, 2025

To: Chair [Rep. Zach Hudson](#), Vice Chairs [Rep. Lisa Fragala](#) and [Rep. Darin Harbick](#)  
and Members of the [House Committee on Higher Education and Workforce Development](#)

Re: [HB 2997](#) – Grant program expanding college access – **Support**

The League of Women Voters of Oregon supports HB2997 which would direct the Higher Education Coordinating Commission to establish a grant program for the purpose of supporting organizations to expand the scope and community reach of college access and success programs. Our support is based on the League of Women Voters of Oregon position: **Through sustaining equitable access and a seamless path from preK to postsecondary education, more Oregon students will prosper.**

We particularly like the fact that grants would be awarded based on a demonstrated history of providing successful college access and success programs and targeting populations that are historically underrepresented in postsecondary education. We understand that these underserved groups include people from low-income households, people of color, and students in career and technical education. Other underserved groups include people with disabilities, the homeless, and rural youth.

Offering these grants is important in light of a [2024 study](#) which found that **Non-traditional learners of color in Oregon say that they want to participate in higher education. (But this would mean) lowering the costs of higher education for all students; providing strong academic, career, and mental health support on campus; hiring and retaining faculty, staff, and administrators of color; and actively engaging higher education in anti-racism efforts to make college a place of belonging and opportunity.**

We urge your support for HB 2997.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lisa Bentson".

Lisa Bentson  
President LWVOR

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jean W. Pierce".

Jean Pierce  
Social Policy Coordinator