

TO: Chair Williams, Vice-Chair Leif, Vice-Chair Ruiz and Members of the Committee

FROM: Brent Wilder
Oregon Alliance of Independent Colleges and Universities

DATE: March 8, 2021

RE: Support for HB 2551

As President of The Alliance, I am writing to express our support for HB 2551 to ensure Oregon invests in the vitality of our communities, by supporting the Oregon Individual Development Account (IDA) Initiative's request for funding to support Oregonians in achieving the dream of homeownership, higher education, starting a business, and other goals.

The Alliance represents 15 of Oregon's accredited, nonprofit private higher education institutions. Together, Alliance colleges and universities enroll more than 25,000 students and award approximately 10,500 degrees (baccalaureate and higher).

In 2010 The Alliance formed an innovative partnership with Community and Shelter Assistance Corp. of Oregon (CASA of Oregon) to create an Alliance Education IDA program (MCSP & E3). This program includes financial education and education planning components, and is available to students meeting defined income limits enrolled at participating Alliance member colleges and universities. The program, designed to encourage the enrollment, persistence and graduation of low-income students, and to reduce their debt burdens currently matches a student's savings 6:1 and provides up to \$3,000 in aid annually for a maximum of four years.

Participation has increased steadily since the program's inception. To date, nearly **700** students at Alliance member institutions have participated in the Alliance Education IDA program. The aggregate total of participating students' savings to date is **\$698,240**, and the combined total of Alliance, Oregon IDA, and Federal matches tendered to the member colleges on these students' behalf is now **\$3,854,150**.

We believe that the partnership between the Alliance and CASA of Oregon is an effective outcome-driven program that builds human capital and fosters long-term goal-setting. **I ask that you support HB 2551 in renewing the IDA Initiative Tax Credit for the next six years.** The IDA Initiative would not be able to accept new savers without your action in 2021. Your support would allow individuals and families from every corner of the state to begin saving for a better future and would help those who are hardest hit by the financial hardships that the spread of COVID has created.

Thank you for your service, and for your attention to this critical request.