

# DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF LANE COUNTY

## Platform Committee

2/19/2015

### **RESOLUTION 2015.07**

#### A resolution of the Democratic Party of Lane County

*Relating to Higher Education in Oregon*

WHEREAS, student debt in the United States exceeds \$1.2 trillion with over 7 million loans in default; and

WHEREAS, college tuition has been increasing an average of 1.2% faster than the rate of inflation for two decades, and fees have increased by 27% in five years; and

WHEREAS, Thomas Jefferson wrote, in a 1786 letter to George Wythe, "The most important bill in our whole code, is that for the diffusion of knowledge among the people ... no other sure foundation can be devised for the preservation of freedom and happiness;" failing to provide public education would "leave the people in ignorance;" and

WHEREAS, Germany has recently abolished its higher education tuition; and

WHEREAS, President Obama proposed providing free access to community college education in his 2015 State of the Union address; and

WHEREAS, although higher education gives obvious benefits to the individuals who are prepared to take advantage of the opportunity, it should be recognized that it is also a public good that brings economic and civic benefits to communities; and

WHEREAS, Senate Bill 81 (SB 81) introduced in the 2015 Oregon legislative session "requires tuition for certain courses offered at community college to be waived" if a person completed appropriate education in Oregon (received a diploma, a GED certificate, or completed grade 12) and has been a resident for at least 12 months; and

WHEREAS, the DPLC platform says that we should "Promote lower tuition through increased public support of Oregon's Higher Education system."

THEREFORE, the Democratic Party of Lane County Resolves that:

SECTION 1. Our legislature should pass SB 81 and improve it by including a needs-based framework for scalable implementation.

SECTION 2. Our legislature should continue to work to fund all education at a quality level, so that early intervention and early childhood learning are improved, k-12 is appropriately funded, and higher education tuition can be greatly reduced without diminishing the quality of Oregon community colleges and public universities.

SECTION 3. Oregon should ensure that it treats education as a public good and should fight against efforts to treat it as just a private benefit.

SECTION 4. We support President Obama's proposal of free access to community college education and encourage other efforts to lower tuition for public higher education.

**Resolved by the Central Committee of the Democratic Party of Lane County,  
Assembled in Eugene, Oregon, February 19, 2015.**

Signed:

X \_\_\_\_\_.

Chris Wig

Chair

X \_\_\_\_\_.

Celine Swenson-Harris

Secretary