

## Molly Walker Transportation Testimony

Hello Chair Boquist and committee members,

My name is Molly Walker. I am a constituent of Senator Taylor. I am a student at Portland Community College and I hold the student seat on our PCC Board of Directors. I am here tonight to testify on the transportation package that will play a pivotal role in the lives of students at community colleges around the state. Affordability at PCC doesn't simply mean tuition or financial aid. Community colleges know that our students are one flat tire, one sick child, one shift change away from missing class or even failing out.

To give you a sense of my peers at PCC, over 50 percent of our students qualify for the maximum pell grant. We care very deeply about keeping tuition prices low. Each year PCC uses 1.3 million dollars of transportation fees to supplement the Tri-met bus passes to all our PCC classes because we know how important it is to support our students of all corners of our region obtain an education. We are asking you to make significant transportation investments so we can get more students to school, from all far reaching communities, and in a timely way that allows students to keep their jobs and finish their degrees.

Personally, I only ride public transportation in Portland, like many students I don't have a car. Since I work with other student leaders at all 4 campuses, I want you to know that it takes over an hour, sometimes an hour and a half, one way, to get to PCC Rock Creek from downtown. Available hours also concern us. Students often study late so for those of us who have to transfer buses that means leaving study groups and missing valuable time that can impact our grades.

As a home-grown Oregonian, I believe deeply in providing transportation options that remove individual car users from the road, lessening traffic, promoting environmentalism, and helping those like me who rely on public transportation for my livelihood and my education. Past my own experience I want you to consider some very true challenges for students at community colleges. For example, if you utilize SNAP benefits and go to school at PCC Rock Creek out in Washington County it might take you a 20-30 bus ride to get any where you can use your EBT card to get lunch. If a student is out at Sylvania and misses a bus to go pick up a kid at childcare you may be charged by the minute for a late fee. That is what we mean by, one sick kid and one missed bus, away from dropping out. At PCC, we work hard to retain students and everyone get to graduation. Your work on this transportation package is imperative to the lives of Oregonians like me.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

Molly Walker