

September 8, 2014

Testimony of Maureen Rowe Crawford

RE: Student Debt Crisis: Pay It Forward

To whom it may concern:

*Our public higher education system is broken! Oregon needs solutions to unsustainable student loan debt. Solutions like, Pay it Forward that give more students access and opportunities to earn a degree, and help graduates earn a living and contribute to our economy without exorbitant debt or potentially damaging their credit scores.*

*I have two sons. They are both saddled with student debt: \$50,000 for one and \$40,000 for another - and \$10,000 for me to help keep them in school!*

*One son graduated with \$40,000 in debt. He was awarded grants, loans and did work-study. Upon graduation, he volunteered and "worked" for free in internships for almost a year while working for low pay a local grocery chain to pay his bills and working to land a job of his dreams. He's found great work, but it is short-term, so facing huge student debt is continues to be really scary.*

*My other son will graduate from PSU next May. He's attended several community colleges and public universities. He currently has \$50,000 in student debt as he enters is last year at PSU. He has worked both full and part-time throughout college.*

*As my kids went through college, I paid \$1000-\$1600 per month (yikes!); they both worked and took on more and more student debt. To insure my sons could stay in college, I took out a \$10,000 loan – which I'm now paying back.*

*Oregon needs to contribute to a self-sustaining system that helps the next generation achieve and succeed. Pay it Forward's time is now! It's an investment in our future – a belief in the success of our students, without subjecting them to ongoing, outrageous student debt where only Wall Street bankers benefit.*

*Pay it forward is a step in the right direction and I urge your support for expeditious implementation.*

Thank you.

Maureen Rowe Crawford  
Portland, Oregon