



NEWS FROM THE OFFICE OF CONGRESSMAN DAVID WU

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WU ANNOUNCES MAJOR EDUCATION LEGISLATION

PORTLAND, Ore. — Today Congressman David Wu announced the introduction of the Urban University Renaissance Act of the 21st Century, which will benefit universities across the country that are located in major urban centers, as well as their local communities.

“While we face many challenges in Oregon and around the nation, none is more urgent right now than the recovery of our economy and getting people back to work,” said Congressman Wu. “Urban universities can serve as the heart of economic renewal by sharing their skills and resources with the communities that surround them. My legislation will help urban universities, like Portland State University, as they lead communities, revitalize neighborhoods, and attract businesses and services to urban areas.”

In addition to educating students and preparing the next generation to become leaders in their chosen fields, urban universities work off campus to raise the quality of life for everyone in the local community.

“This bill acknowledges and encourages the core mission of urban universities, to build sustainable communities,” said Portland State University President Wim Wiewel. “Congressman Wu understands that it is only by supporting partnerships with local businesses, nonprofits, and K-12 that universities like Portland State can achieve their mission.”

Congressman Wu’s legislation recognizes the multi-faceted role that urban universities play and includes sections that focus on education, health care, innovation, and housing, among other provisions. Highlights of the legislation include:

- Helping more teachers learn the specific skills needed to successfully teach in urban environments, ultimately helping our cities have more—and more qualified—educators.
- Encouraging urban universities to work alongside mayors, superintendents, and business leaders in their cities and regions to ensure that high school graduation requirements are better aligned with college and workforce expectations—making urban youth better prepared for college and a career.
- Revitalizing the core of our urban universities by reestablishing a program in the Higher Education Act to support the varied beneficial work of urban schools.
- Supporting university research on environmental issues in low-income neighborhoods.
- Providing for public health research to reduce health disparities and improve care.

- Helping urban universities provide assistance to local nonprofits committed to community development and affordable housing, strengthening existing programs to make them more effective locally.
- Strengthening innovation policies to promote partnerships that create regional economic growth.

"We are always looking for opportunities to improve our communities by partnering with local organizations—local and regional government, community-based organizations, and business organizations," said Sheila Martin, director of Portland State University's Institute of Portland Metropolitan Studies. "This federal commitment to support university partnerships will help us to align those efforts and move more quickly toward a healthier, more prosperous metropolitan region."

By laying out a comprehensive vision for expanding, improving, and acting upon the needs of our urban centers, Congressman Wu's legislation provides a roadmap for how urban universities can help strengthen our communities as we emerge from the current economic downturn, all while becoming stronger themselves.

"Urban areas face many challenges and opportunities unique to cities," said Nancy Zimpher, chair of the Coalition of Urban Serving Universities and chancellor of the State University of New York (SUNY). "Urban universities are distinctly positioned with a broad range of skills and resources—intellectual, human, technological, and social—to engage in these issues. This federal investment in urban universities will scale up innovative efforts around education, neighborhood revitalization, economic development, and health to provide a greater national impact on strengthening metropolitan prosperity."

Congressman Wu will introduce the Urban University Renaissance Act in the U.S. House of Representatives on Tuesday, June 22, 2010. Full text of the bill will be available from the Library of Congress at thomas.gov shortly afterward.

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