

# Oregon Student Association



## SB576: Kaylee's Law

Dear Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

My name is Ozmund Smith, and I use they/them pronouns. I am the Student Body President at Central Oregon Community College, and I am here today on behalf of students who want to see change. I am here in support of Senate Bill 576, named after a student from my college, Kaylee Sawyer.

I started school at COCC in 2017, and Campus Public Safety was a notable presence from day one. Arriving at the residence hall for move in day, I was greeted by a standard issue police vehicle, complete with red light bars and pit bumpers. The officers piloting them were equipped with badges, hefty utility belts, and what seemed to be bullet-proof vests, alongside uniforms that match the colors of neighboring police forces. Based on this initial exposure, I had every reason to believe that these people were fully trained officers of the law.

A term later, I was driving back to campus late after taking a friend home. At 2 am, I did not come to a full and complete stop at a stop sign in the parking lot just outside our building. Almost immediately, I saw lights flash, and I yielded to the nearest available parking spot. The officer pulled up behind me, boxing me in and eliminating any option to disengage from the stop.

In my six years of driving, I've been pulled over once or twice. But this experience felt different, felt like the beginning of a bad story. It was dark, the parking lot had no other people in it, I didn't have my cell phone if I needed to call for help, and we were not in clear view of the residence hall. I was with my roommate, who is also biologically female, and because of our anatomy, we are often perceived to be women. This puts us in a greater danger of harassment in situations like these.

He requested my information, and I complied. I'd seen students backpacks randomly checked, had officers knock on my door at all hours of the night over "noise complaints" that couldn't be substantiated by the Community Assistants. I understood that I had no power in this position.

It wasn't until I learned of *another* person who was made to feel powerless and lost her life because of it, that I was able to re-contextualize what happened that night. I was **lucky**, but I was also compliant, because I had no knowledge that I had the right to be anything otherwise. This officer was alone on duty, with no cameras, limited training, sparse background checks, and no way of being directly located while on patrol. He was unchecked in his power and authority over us, and few accountability measures were in place to protect *us* from *him*.

## OREGON STUDENT ASSOCIATION

For more information contact Perla Alvarez, Legislative Director [perla@orstudents.org](mailto:perla@orstudents.org) or 503-358-2927  
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Not all officers will abuse their power, but students deserve more than luck to rely on during interactions with public safety officers. Our student's lives should not be dependent on how an individual officer, with little accountability and resources equivalent to that of sworn police officers, chooses to conduct themselves. We need structures in place that protect students, so that we can feel safe on campus, not in jeopardy of exploitation or violence by the people sworn to protect us.

I am here because I was lucky, and your vote should be in consideration of those who have not. Kaylee's Law is her voice and the voice of students everywhere, who need to see change in this system of power. For our safety, for our education, and for our lives, vote yes on SB 576.

Thank you for your time.

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