



Date: 03/20/19

To: Chair Wagner and members of the Senate Committee on Education

From: Kelli Horvath, Government Relations, Oregon Education Association

RE: Support for SB 859 and SB 958

Chair Wagner and members of the Committee,

The Oregon Education Association (OEA) represents more than 44,000 educators who serve more than 600,000 students. Our members include educators, specialists, support staff, custodians, bus drivers, and community college faculty/staff from across the state. OEA would like to express our support for SB 859 and SB 958, and encourage the committee to do the same.

Since Oregon's original "Tuition Equity" bill, HB 2787, passed in 2013, more than 500 qualifying students have been able to access in-state tuition rates and pursue higher education. As a result, Oregon has maximized the investment it has made in these students at the K-12 level, ensuring that they have an affordable path to continue their education in a state they have come to call home. Tuition Equity has helped Oregon make sure that students who want to give back to Oregon and give back to their communities by pursuing postsecondary education can do so.

By allowing qualifying graduate students to access in-state tuition rates, SB 859 will only continue this trend. SB 958, which will award student loans to qualifying undocumented students pursuing postsecondary education, will also improve access to postsecondary education for all students—especially those from traditionally underserved communities.

Every day in the classroom, educators see the great potential that Oregon students hold. OEA believes that students who have come to call Oregon home and gone to school here should be able to continue making great contributions to their communities. An affordable, accessible pathway to postsecondary education is a critical component of Oregon's ability to do that, so we urge you to support SB 859 and SB 958.

Kelli Horvath

Government Relations

Oregon Education Association