

Hello to the Education Committee,

My name is Tamara Zelen and I am a student at Portland State University.

I am here to ask you to join our students in supporting HB 2590, the Student Voice Bill.

This bill is all about making sure our colleges and universities work for all students and can help us graduate and get good paying jobs. Right now, our campuses aren't equipped to help everyone succeed. In my experience, barriers include scholarships not being available to students who have my major. As a psychology student, I do not see a lot of scholarships that I may apply to, or even ones that I would be applicable for.

Another barrier I experience is my inability to walk freely without worrying about assault or harassment which is why I believe having a campus free of harassment where I can live comfortably and safely. There are students on campus who have assaulted others, and have not seen any consequences for their actions. It would be accessible and safe to have a no tolerance policy for students who assault--once is enough. I am not part of an underrepresented community myself. However, I have friends who are, and it is extremely important that I see my fellow friends and students have the representation that they need, and the access to higher education and financial aid. Online school is thousands of dollars per term. For us to learn on our computers- but what if students have poor wifi or no computer access? I believe that COVID has really made it difficult for people I know to afford school, or who really struggle to have access to classes.

There are many students with many different needs that need to be met. This bill can help change that by creating a special committee to tour our campuses and look at what is working, and what is not working. This process would create an opportunity for students like me to be heard, that's why it is so important that you vote yes.

We really need to get college right in Oregon, because the future of our economy depends on it. The Oregon Employment Department projects that between 2019-2029, occupations that require higher levels of education for entry will grow fastest.

Please remember my story when you vote on this bill, and please join me in supporting HB 2590.

Thank you for your time,

Tamara Zelen