

Hello to the Education Committee,

My name is Timothy Withrow, and I am a student at the University of Oregon.

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

Even now it still feels like the university could be doing more to bring transparency to its tuition/cost/fee structure. When planning for my loans during freshman year it was a constant annoyance to find that the Housing and Meal Plan costs weren't separated. I truly believe a comprehensive breakdown of mandatory fees would bring some much-needed transparency and comprehension to the overall financial process. People should know exactly where their money is going, especially when every dollar counts. These frustrations surrounding transparency and comprehension also apply to the process for receiving much needed financial aid.

Applying for financial aid has always been a frustrating experience for someone like me who has a non-standard financial situation. Every time I've submitted my financial aid application I've had to go through the process of verification, often with little help from the university besides listing what they require. As a first-generation student, the constant back and forth I've had to have with my parents and the financial aid office over specific forms, deadlines, points of contact, etc has been very stress inducing and is something I think could be greatly improved upon.

College should be a place where one's focus is on the horizon and all the opportunities it has to offer, not whether they can afford to live on campus, if they have to juggle school work and a job, how dorm costs affect their food budget, or how much they have to pay for textbooks. The financial uncertainty tied to just existing as a college student has always taken up space in my mind, requiring resources I could instead be using to pursue opportunities to get involved both on and off campus. I should be stressing out over all the new opportunities for growth I have yet to explore and not whether I can even afford to be here. Having the chance to no longer be burdened by financial uncertainty would be greatly appreciated and is something I think would be paid back in dividends.

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

Thank you for your time,

Timothy Withrow

