

Hello to the Education Committee,

My name is Arlette Tapia Lopez and I am studying criminal justice at Western Oregon 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, as a student of color, the transition from high school to higher education was a rocky road and not an easy process. There was a lack of information and support. What would help me is access to higher education and financial aid. This would have allowed me and others to have a much smoother transition into higher ed. As I am an individual who is not eligible for FAFSA, any financial aid resources would be helpful and will allow me to see what my options are. I would look for a school who does their utmost to assist students' needs and an administration who reaches out to students to help them succeed. Lack of communication with students as well as lack of diversity within committees and faculty/staff have also been endemic problems; solving these would help me feel much more welcome on campus.

There are many students with many different needs being 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,  
Arlette Tapia Lopez