

Hello to the Education Committee,

My name is Colby Schafer and I am a student 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, I've seen a lot of hate against the LGBTQ+ community as well as extremely prejudiced assumptions about people coming from low income families. It's gotten to the point where I feel unsafe to publicly come out. What would help me is more financial aid. This would alleviate all of my concerns regarding needing to go into serious debt just to continue my education or trying to do part time or full time work in tandem with education and having my academics suffer. In addition, there is a massive need to keep the academic environment free of hate speech and the closed mindedness that pollutes society as a whole. Too often I see people hiding behind their social media to spread hateful things. While I was only just admitted to WOU, something I would want to see is a specific taskforce of people dedicated to responding to reported actions of student's misconduct, preferably with its own student representation

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,

Colby Schafer