

Thank you Chair Alonso León and members of the Education Committee,

My name is Leila Jebara and I am a student at Lane Community College.

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, international students have very few scholarships and campus job opportunities compared to domestic students. Considering the immense and ever-rising cost of tuition, and the fact that International students are barred from working off campus to support ourselves while we pursue our education, drastically expanding the availability of scholarships, emergency funds, and jobs that are available for international and domestic students is a necessary step to meaningful access to higher education.

It's not easy to be here for International students. It is not easy for our families to pay so we can be here and study. It's not easy to ignore the harmful interactions I and many other international students encounter because we are not from here. And it certainly is not easy needing to skip meals in order to keep a roof over our heads and continue studying.

I want to grow, I want to learn, I want to take on as many opportunities as I can. But I cannot do these things if there are no opportunities for me and other students like me to prosper and be the absolute best student of academia that I can be.

There are many students with many different needs not 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,
Leila Jabara