

*Dear Chair Alonso Leon, Vice Chairs Neron and Weber, and Members of the House Education Committee. My name is Ashley Mendoza I fully support HB 3363-1 because It is vital that we have a diverse student lead group that can effectively advocate on behalf of themselves and other students who are underserved and underrepresented in our communities. As a person of color who lived in poverty and faced many obstacles throughout their K-12 educational experience, I find it particularly important that students have access to equal educational opportunities. I didn't have any knowledge of how to advocate my needs in K-12 nor did I know how to navigate the school system in a way that would set me up for success. By chance I happened to learn about a program in high school that would help me get into college because I passed a bulletin board in the school hallway. That's the issue though, there should not be a "by chance" scenario there should only be deliberate opportunity for student success. All students should have basic knowledge and understanding on how to navigate within the department of education, that would aid them to graduation with the help of entrusted representatives from both tribal student councils and student leadership organizations. By supporting policy HB 3363-1, you are supporting equal access to education without race,gender,sex and disabilities hindering students success and turn the underrepresented and underserved youth into youth who can be represented and served adequately through student leadership. If we want to see a decrease in high school drop-outs and juveniles being pipelined to prisons then opportunities need to be created, this is your chance to help. Thank you for taking the time to read my letter. I urge you to vote yes on HB 3363-1 .*