

Dear Chair Dembrow and Members of the Committee,

My name is Ashley Boyes . I am the child of a student parent (the second oldest of 5), I attended Oregon State University just like my mother did before me. I am writing today in support of SB 564.

Currently, Oregon lacks comprehensive data to indicate the number of college students that are also parents. This lack of data creates a significant barrier to making appropriate determinations about the specific educational needs and outcomes of student parents.

Identifying this key demographic information will allow institutions to best determine the proper allocation of resources that seek to increase access to higher education for student parents and support them in the completion of their degrees.

This matters to me because families should have access to higher education. I come from a large family which have lived in rural areas under the poverty level all of their lives. My mom, a parent of 5, wanted to show us kids that there was more potential in the world for us and one of the ways she demonstrated that was by obtaining her masters degree at 40. Looking back, those were hard times but she succeeded to show us it was possible. To show herself it was possible. Because of her I graduated with a Bachelors degree and worked to help Michaela Martin into a student leadership position where she helped student parents, like my mom, on campus. This information will make lives better for student parents, their children, and the community as a whole.

It is also important to acknowledge that the Covid-19 pandemic has created even more difficulties for student parents who are now attempting to homeschool themselves and their children as they pursue college degrees.

All students deserve to have the programs they need in order to succeed academically and Senate Bill 564 is the first step towards making this possible.

I believe that requiring public post-secondary institutions to identify whether a student is a parent, acting as a parent, or a guardian is an essential and desperately needed tool in the fight to lower the educational barriers for parenting students and close the achievement gap.

This is why I urge you to support SB 564.

Let student parents be counted.

Let them be seen.

Let their stories resonate through this hearing room, because they deserve to be heard.

Thank you to Senator Gelser for championing this bill and to Chair Dembrow for sponsoring it.

Thank you to the committee for this opportunity to submit my testimony in support of SB 564,

Ashley Boyes