

Dear Chair Dembrow and Members of the Committee,

My name is Braedon Green, I am 21-years old, and a resident of Portland. I was born in Oregon and grew up between Oregon and Boston while my mom was finishing college and graduate school as a student parent. I was enrolled in the Gateway to College program at PCC when I became pregnant with my now 20-month old daughter Verdandi. 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 I struggled to stay in college as a pregnant student, and it's been even harder to get back into college now that I'm a mom. My pregnancy was very difficult and it made it hard for me to make it to class during my pregnancy. This meant that I had to take a break from school, and unfortunately because of this, I aged out of the program before graduating. Being a mother is like constantly juggling. Juggling work, school, friendship, and parenting along with all the other balls life throws at you. It is a constant struggle and it is easy to drop one if not more of these balls, especially if one or two of these balls just doesn't fit in our hand right. The traditional standard of being a single 18-25 year old college student is one that doesn't really represent all the students who currently attend college. If we continue to ignore the voice of our student parents, than postsecondary education will increasingly become a ball that we need to improve our quality of life, but just doesn't quite fit in our hands. I believe the option to use our voice and represent ourselves is critical to making sure that this ball doesn't become so heavy and misshapen that it no longer fits in the palm of our hands.

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 us be seen.

Let our 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,

Braedon Green  
Portland, Oregon