

Date: 04/12/2021

To: Co-Chairs Johnson, Steiner-Hayward, and Rayfield, Co-Vice Chairs, and members of the committee

My name is Ashley Bolen I am a student at Rogue Community College in Medford. I am writing to request your support for **HB2835**.

Having a Benefits Navigator on my campus is important to me because finding available resources can be very overwhelming and stressful, not to mention time consuming! It was really nice to have the STEP program available to me this semester to help me with a gas card, food, a laptop and book vouchers. These kinds of programs literally make all the difference in the world from college being a dream to an actual real, achievable goal for some of us! The biggest challenge for me is childcare. I am a single mother trying to get a degree so that I can support my children on my own in just a couple short years, instead of being dependent on the system for help indefinitely. I believe that college students need all the support they can get! If we want a country of educated people, we need to do what we can to educate them! I believe everyone who starts college has the intention of graduating, but so many people drop out due to lack of resources. I myself am taking a break because the courses I need to continue to the health and human services program are not available online in a way that I can attend while my toddler naps (this is what I've been doing). I have attended 2 semesters while doing all my course work in the time my toddler naps! It isn't easy and I can't manage full time this way. If there were more help with childcare, even just a few hours a week, I would be able to handle a full time schedule.

Please realize that these programs are so important and we need more of them. Having someone available who can take us by the hand and navigate through resources for us is just something you can't put a value on!

Ashley Bolen, Rogue Community College, Medford