

Hello to the Ways and Means Committee,

My name is Kaitlyn Slatlem and I am a student at Portland State University.

I am here to ask you to fully fund 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, most of my barriers have been financial. I can't work a lot so I'm in a month to month living situation. During the COVID 19 pandemic my landlord has attempted to raise my rent twice, succeeding the second time. Mental health barriers have also kept me from succeeding as well as I should in my school work. Personally, I believe offering more night courses for students who work full time jobs would help not only me, but many other students tremendously. I had a wonderful job as a legal assistance/receptionist but had to quit for bartending because PSU does not cater to full time employees. I believe everyone has the fundamental right to a higher education; barriers that prevent disenfranchised communities from obtaining a college degree should be targeted and dismantled.

This bill would highlight student voices like mine by creating a committee that would look at what college campuses are lacking in terms of the systems put in place for underrepresented student academic success.

We really need to make education more accessible 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 set the budget, and please join me in supporting full funding for HB 2590.

Thank you for your time,

Kaitlyn Slatlem