

Hello to the Ways and Means Committee,

Please fully fund HB 2590 The Student Voice Bill.

This bill is 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, as a student of color, the transition from high school to higher education was a rocky road and not an easy process. There was a lack of information and support. As I am an individual who is not eligible for FAFSA, access to higher education and financial aid would have allowed me and others to have a much smoother transition into higher ed. In addition, a big problem at WOU has been lack of communication with students, lack of diversity within committees and lack of diversity within faculty/staff; solving these would help me feel much more welcome on campus. Moreover, for many years WOU students of color have been wanting to implement a Cultural Diversity Center, which will be an open and safe space for students of color on campus. The students at WOU have been advocating for a center and administration has pushed it back many times.

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 get college right 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 budgets, and please fully fund HB 2590.

Thank you for your time,
Arlette Tapia Lopez