



Emily Wanous

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Dear Chair Alonso Leon, Vice-Chair Neron and Weber, and members of the House Education committee,

For the record, my name is Emily Wanous and I am the Legislative Director for the Oregon Student Association. **I am here today in support of SB712**, which would extend voting rights to all positions within the HECC by redesignating the five current nonvoting student, staff, and faculty positions. In addition, this bill would add a position for a graduate student attending a public university.

The HECC was established in order to make critical decisions within Oregon's postsecondary education system and to represent the diverse stakeholder groups included. Considering students, faculty and staff make up a majority of most-impacted populations within higher education, we must ensure their voices are not only heard, but included in the established voting process.

Extending voting rights to students, faculty and staff is an important step in normalizing what it means to have an equitable representation structure that allows for the impacted stakeholders to give meaningful input. The passage of SB712 would solidify the HECC's commitment to intentional participation from student, staff, and faculty voices who make up our diverse campus communities.

The argument that students cannot comprehend the complex and in depth processes within budget and policy is one that is outdated and does not honor the power within the lived experiences of our communities. The conversation around whether students should be included in student-centered decision-making bodies is far too common. When such conversations continue to arise, students are left wondering if they belong in these spaces to begin with. This form of gatekeeping can inadvertently deter true input from the communities most impacted.

With all that being said, I urge your yes vote on this important piece of legislation.