

Dear Chair Dembrow and Members of the Committee,

My name is Charlie Green, I am a resident of Prineville, Oregon, and a former student parent at Chemeketa and Portland Community Colleges. 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 my wife and I have both been student parents, and because my daughter is now a student parent. I struggled a lot in school as a person with disabilities, and could have benefitted from more support for my identity as a student dad. I have also seen that my wife's success as a student parent has completely changed my children's lives and their futures for the better. Now, my granddaughter's future also depends upon my daughter's success as a student parent. I want to see her to be valued, supported, and uplifted as a mother pursuing a college education.

COVID-19 has made things even harder for student parents. I see my own daughters struggle to stay in college right now, and I imagine that many student parents are struggling and dropping out.

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,

Charlie Green
Prineville, Oregon