

Dear Chair and Members of the House Education Committee,

My name is Theresa Mai, and I live in Multnomah County. Currently, I am a junior at Oregon State University majoring in public policy and psychology.

Today, I am asking you to vote yes on HB 2835. This bill helps address the food and housing insecurity crisis among students at our colleges and universities.

I understand that many people already explained the facts and the numbers of this crisis, so instead, I am writing to tell you my story. When I started college, my mother took care of my family with a low-wage job, so I knew I was on my own. Since college was my dream, I applied to countless scholarships, picked up several jobs, and took on college loans to make it a possibility. Unfortunately, it was not enough. I had to starve myself to save enough money.

I was so focused on surviving that it has also impacted my life. Within my first year of college, I lost so much weight that I was like a stick. In class, I would pinch my stomach, so my hunger would not be heard across the lecture hall. Fortunately, I was able to receive food assistance funds from staff at OSU soon after. Without it, I may not be where I am today, where I am proud to testify in support of this bill.

Even so, I was only one of the lucky ones. Not every student attends a college or university with the same level of support, which is why having a Basic Needs Navigator at every college campus is so crucial. Therefore, I urge the Chair and Members of the committee to vote in favor of HB 2835.

Thank you,

Theresa Mai