

Dear Chair Dembrow and Members of the Committee,

My name is Zoe Taylor, and I live in the University of Oregon Spencer View Apartments which are apartments geared towards students that have children. 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 although I do not have children, I live in a community where most students do. I personally never knew how many college students also had kids, and it was surprising to me that there are so many, especially given the lack of recourses for them. My own mom recently went back to school, and I know if there were recourses for her she could've gone back when she wanted to years ago when my brother and I were much younger.

It is also important to acknowledge that the Covid-19 pandemic has created even more difficulties for student parents who are now attempting to homeschool themselves and their children as they pursue college degrees.

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 them be seen.

Let their 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,