

Dear Chair Dembrow and Members of the Committee,

My name is Dr. Andrew Perry, I am a resident of Salem, a small-business owner, a practicing physician, and a father and grandfather. I attended the National College of Naturopathic Medicine—now National University of Naturopathic Medicine--when my daughter Autumn was an infant and toddler, before moving to Salem to start my medical practice. I also served as Department Chair for Physical Medicine at NCNM (now NUNM) from 1989 through 1994. I am writing today in support of SB 564.

Currently, Oregon lacks comprehensive data to indicate the number of college students that have children. 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 I have been a student parent, my wife and my children have been student parents, and many of my students at NCNM were also student parents. I have seen in my professional how student parents struggle to succeed in higher education—and I have lived it in my personal life as well. Colleges and universities cannot accurately assess needs or create resources for student parents without knowing their demographics.

COVID-19 has made things even harder for student parents as people adapt to virtual environments and new responsibilities and hardships at home. This makes counting student parents more important than ever.

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.

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,

Dr. Andrew M. Perry, N.D, Naturopathic Physician and President, Peripole, Inc.  
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