

Paul L Evans
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
DISTRICT 20



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

February 24, 2021

Representative Teresa Alonso Leon
House Committee on Education
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Ref: HB 3012

Chair Alonso Leon:

House Bill 3012 is about equity, fairness, and justice. Over the past thirty-five years, public colleges and universities have taken great advantage of so-called "Incidental Fees." These fees, paid for exclusively by students, were originally intended as fees for things that other institutionally determined fees did not pay for. As a former student government leader, I know first-hand how this evolution occurred.

Years ago, students made strides in developing various methods for ensuring student voice in these expenditures. Incidental Fees were understood to be the "taxes" levied upon the student body by a partnership of the institution and the student government, expressly for student priorities.

The world has fundamentally changed since the early 1990s. Now, student fees are used for all kinds of purposes that may or may not have anything at all to do with student priorities. Over this past year, institutions seeking available revenue to stabilize institutional responsibilities often treated Incidental Fees as merely one of the many fees – and for their own purposes – quite often for programming vastly different from student priorities. Many institutions require fees for housing, laboratory expenses, meals, parking, and technology. These are on top of tuition. Public institutions' need to levy fees for programming beyond baseline tuition has not been, and is not now, in dispute. Instead, the function of Incidental Fees – separate and distinct from the others – is the point of this bill.

HB 3012 adjusts language to secure student control. If passed, Incidental Fees for our public colleges and universities would be determined by students, for students. America was founded upon the rationale that taxation without representation was justification for a revolution. Knowingly or unknowingly, our public colleges and universities have demonstrated that they have misunderstood the intent of Incidental Fees. Our students are adults, and more importantly, adults paying an increasingly larger portion of their education. I believe it is time they have unfettered control over the Incidental Fee process. With your assistance, our students will learn how to govern themselves better and balance the competing needs for available resources.

In conclusion, I want to thank you for your attention to this matter. I ask for a positive disposition of this bill. Together we can provide tomorrow's leaders with the experience of self-governance, and through that effort, assure the continuation of this American Experiment.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Paul L. Evans".