

Hello Chair Representative Williams, Vice-Chair Ruiz, Vice-Chair Scharf, and members of the House Committee On Human Services,

For the record, my name is Eleazar Gamez, currently a fourth-year student attending Portland State University. I am also the Director of DreamPSU, a student organization focused to unite, empower, and provide a space and resources for undocumented, immigrant, DREAMer and DACA related communities. Additionally I also serve as the community liaison for SOAR Immigration Legal Services. I am here before you today to talk about the *DREAMers Belong Act*.

I am a first-generation DACAmented college student, working to double major in Child youth and family studies, as well as in social sciences. I am also the caregiver and guardian to my younger brother since my mothers passing a couple of years ago due to breast cancer. Since I have taken on the guardianship of my younger brother, I have assumed all financial responsibilities at home as head of household. Currently, I pay over \$2,000 in monthly bills and expenses. All while being a full time student enrolled in 16 credits and active in different student organizations. I wake up at 3:30 am Wednesday through Sunday to provide an income for my brother and I and make sure I pay bills and make ends meet.

Since my mothers passing, it has been difficult for me to keep a balance in school and working to make ends meet. In the past year, July of 2021, I had to submit my renewal application for me to continue to have DACA. I at the time was struggling financially. I had to prioritize some bills over others. I did not have the \$495 needed for the application fee. Fortunately, there was a local non-profit organization, *Centro Cultural* located in Cornelius, Oregon. At the moment, they were helping folks in need of financial assistance with their renewal fee. Without their help, I would have had to either choose between postponing paying two bills or reaching out to a family member or friend for assistance on this matter. I shouldn't have to choose between paying bills or renewing my DACA application.

I should have the support of my State for this matter. I along with over 9,000 DACA folks in the state of Oregon contribute to the economy and pay our local, state and federal taxes. I have lived in Oregon for the past 12 years. This state is my home, and I hope that the place I call home supports it's DACAmented citizens. I ask for you to highly consider passing this bill that would provide assistance and support to this marginalized community, a community often left in the dark yet contributes so much to the state. For these reasons I urge you to pass the *Dreamers Belong Act*, because Dreamers belong in the state and in this country.

Thank you for your time and consideration.