

Hello Chair Wagner, Vice-Chair Knopp, and the rest of the Senate Rules Committee,

My name is Brian Montes and I am a sophomore studying Political Science at Portland State University and a member of the Oregon Student Association. I am also the Legislative Affairs Director of the Associated Students of Portland State University, PSU's student government.

I am here to ask you to support the second proposed amendment to SB 1503 due to the importance of establishing a dedicated funding stream for the Oregon Opportunity Grant.

The Oregon Opportunity Grant is the largest public financial aid program in the state of Oregon, and yet despite that, it has never come close to being awarded to every student who is eligible to receive it. This is, in part, due to its funding source; instead of being directly funded by any specific program, its funding comes from the state's general fund, leaving it susceptible to wide variations in funding depending on the economy. Though the legalization of betting on collegiate athletics has no direct effect on students, the opportunity to turn this new industry into something that would directly benefit low-income Oregonians seeking an education would be absolutely massive. It is only fitting that an industry that benefits from the often-uncompensated labor of college students would be able to funnel the profits it makes into directly helping Oregon's students who need it most.

In my experience, I've learned first hand the importance of financial aid and the way that it can often mean the difference between a peace of mind versus having to decide between which bills to pay. I am one of thousands of college students whose very enrollment in higher education is entirely dependent on financial aid grants like the Oregon Opportunity Grant. As a recently new Oregon resident, it is my sincere hope to apply for the Oregon Opportunity Grant and other state financial aid, because without it, I simply do not have the means to attend any Oregon Higher Education institution. I wish I could say that I am just a handful of students in this situation, but that is not the case. If we all hope to better the future for all Oregonians, we must start with our education system by making it more accessible and affordable to the very people that need it most: students.

As a student leader, I also get to see the hard work and dedication students put into their professions, whether they be in student government, or in athletics. Student labor is labor. Far too often, students and their labor go unrewarded, unseen, and unheard by larger institutions and powers that view student labor as an expendable workforce. The truth of the matter is that when students work hard, they contribute to their collegiate community and regional economies just like any other person. We cannot uplift all students without compensating students for their labor, and the

second proposed amendment for SB 1503 would do just that. We cannot allow our fellow student-athletes, your neighbors, my peers, to have their labor used for spectacle and lottery without any form of compensation or benefit.

Please remember my story when you vote on this bill, and please join me in making higher education more accessible for those who need it most by supporting the second proposed amendment to SB 1503. The profit from entertainment that relies on college students should go back to college communities and, specifically, the students who need the funds the most.

Thank you for your time,



Brian Montes  
Legislative Affairs Director  
Associated Students of Portland State University

