

Submitter: MARIA ZAVALA  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Rules  
Measure: SB1503

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

My name is Maria Zavala and I am a senior studying economics and sociology at Portland State University and a member of the Oregon Student Association.

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, access to higher education has only been attainable by borrowing or receiving grants. Even though I am eligible to receive this grant, I have not been able to. This lack of stable funding excludes many students who are in great need of assistance. As a first generation student caring for my disabled mother, finishing up higher education has required tremendous effort and drive. Had I been able to receive this aid, I could have worked less. This would have helped reduce my financial barriers to higher education. Additionally, I could have borrowed less loans and not have the crushing debt I have incurred.

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,

Maria Zavala