

Submitter: Mark Foster  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Education  
Measure: SB572

I am a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor with the State of Oregon and I have had the privilege and honor of working with Portland State University's Career & Community Studies (CCS) program and their students since 2015. In this program, students with intellectual and developmental disabilities get to experience what is it like to be in college, a privilege that so many of their non-disabled peers take for granted. I have supported many of the students that have attended the program who got to experience college in an inclusive, accessible, and supported educational environment. They attend and audit classes that match their interests, work on papers and presentations like their peers, participate in social groups and clubs, live on campus or in the community, and work in jobs that give them meaning and purpose. The CCS staff, advisors, and teachers are instrumental to making the college experience accessible and possible for these students. As a result, I have seen the students achieve better employment outcomes as a result of going through this program. It is the mission of Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation to help Oregonians with disabilities to achieve, maintain and advance in employment and independence and this program is so crucial for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. I would love to this program be made available to community colleges as well, as this will reach students who may not be able to afford going to a public university, or they can choose to attend 2 years with an option to transfer to Portland State University. I fully support this bill for the aforementioned reasons, and I sincerely hope that committee strongly considers passing this extremely important and valuable bill as well. Thank you!

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