

Chair Lively, Vice Chair Ruiz, Vice Chair McIntire, and members of the House Higher Education Committee,

My name is Andrea Retano, and I am writing today to speak in support of Senate Bill 424, which would prohibit the practice of transcript withholding as a debt collection practice.

I am a grad student at Oregon State University in the department of horticulture. I am fortunate that because of my fellowship, I have a tuition waiver. However, my fellowship does not cover the entirety of my fees and does not compensate for the high cost of living in Corvallis.

For this reason, I continuously apply for scholarships to cover these extra expenses. Most of the time scholarship applications require official transcripts. I attempted to apply for a scholarship in the fall to cover the excessive fees but was unable to submit an official transcript due to my fees. I eventually had to pull out loan money (that is very limited due to my tuition waiver) or else my registration would be put on hold.

As I am nearing the end of my masters and beginning to apply for PhD programs, I will need to have access to my transcripts. My ability to pay for university fees should not be such a major determining factor in my scholarship applications or furthering my academic career as a PhD student. Awards and scholarships also increase chances of career advancements. Not being able to access my transcripts keeps me from being a competitive candidate for positions.

Thank you for your time, and we hope that students can count on your support of Senate Bill 424.