

Submitter: Angelica Ortiz
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure: SB5506

I am the Resource Navigator for Tillamook Bay Community College. My role is to refer students and their families to other agencies where they can apply for basic needs benefits, or any other resources they need that can help them to be successful in classes.

I really like my job; however, it is very frustrating to have a role where I have to refer students to services that do not qualify.

Most of the students who come to me for a referral are immigrant students with a status that does not allow them to access benefits.

It is sad to see that these students who have come in search of a better life are struggling to survive due to the rules that the country/state imposes on them.

I have been in this position for two years and have seen all kinds of struggles that students and their families face.

Recently, a family arrived from Guatemala, they arrived in this country due to a situation of violence and the country allowed them to enter with a political asylum permit. The family is made up of two girls and their mother, they arrived with another family member, so they have a place to live for now, but they do not have an income, since immigration asked the mother not to work until she has a work permit. The only place where they can find food is in the food bank that we have on campus, but it is not enough.

Unfortunately, the situation this family is facing is not unique, there are many more families having the same problem. During the time that I have been working with low-income students, I have observed how people have to go hungry. Many of the students have to choose between finding a job to feed their families or pursuing their dream of having an education.

It is for this reason that I support bill 5506 so that students and their families can have an opportunity where they do not have to choose between the most basic needs and obtaining an education.