

Submitter: Robin Bailey

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Higher Education and Workforce  
Development

Measure, Appointment or  
Topic: HB3213

Chair Hudson, Vice Chair Fragala, Vice Chair Harbick and members of the House  
Higher Education Committee,

My name is Robin Bailey, and I am a student journalist at the University of Oregon. I  
am submitting written testimony in support of HB 3213, which will raise Oregon's  
open government and public records standards by ensuring public university  
foundations are subject to the public records laws of this state.

\$2.9 billion. That's what the UO Foundation's 2024 assets were worth. Of that \$2.9  
billion, the Foundation controls a \$1.63 billion endowment — part of the 92.5% total  
of public university endowments in Oregon restricted by "secret donor-imposed  
conditions, limiting how the funds can be used," according to AFT-Oregon.

For the sake of our collective future, this behind-closed-doors exchange of capital  
cannot continue. Foundations use a public institution's name and likeness while  
coordinating resources to support student affordability and academic programming —  
given this close relationship, public university foundations must be held to the same  
transparency standards as public institutions. As a student journalist, I know how  
frustrating it is to try to glean financial information from confusing university websites  
and rummage through red tape administrative bureaucracy; these inaccessible  
practices obfuscate transparency and prevent the oversight and watchdoggery  
necessary to keep our institutions responsible.

Unfortunately, this is a decades-long issue: In a 2010 interview with The  
Oregonian/OregonLive, super donor Phil Knight championed his influence over UO  
and its then-president Richard Lariviere, wanting us to "take a step toward becoming  
more of a private university," and that UO "basically (is) a private university that's  
hamstrung by public policy."

Wealthy beneficiaries cannot continue to have such sway over public universities in  
private conversations — UO and other institutions in this state need to serve the  
interests of their students, workers and community first. By adopting this common-  
sense reform, Oregon can strengthen public trust, ensure responsible stewardship of  
philanthropic funds and uphold the integrity of our higher education system.

Thank you for your time. I hope I can count on your support of HB 3213.