

Chair Frederick, Vice-Chair Weber, and Members of the Committee,

Hello, my name is Amity Givens. I am here today to testify in support of SB 979.

In March of 2020, my life changed after I contracted COVID-19, which eventually became a disabling condition for me, also known as Long Covid. In addition I have a genetic hearing loss, Hereditary Hemochromatosis and I'm neurodivergent.

As I struggled to adapt to my new physical state I decided to pursue career upskilling at Portland Community College. The expansion of virtual classes during the pandemic made this possible, allowing me to continue my education while protecting my compromised immune system.

During my time at PCC, Disability Services worked tirelessly to provide the closed captioning I needed for a required class – one I could not graduate without. While things worked out for me in the end, accommodations were not instant. Accommodations can take time to arrange, and require adjustments. I had to drop the class twice before finally being able to take it the following year, which was my last term at PCC.

Delays in accommodations disrupt students' ability to keep up with coursework, complete assignments, and fully participate in class. When support isn't provided on time, students face unnecessary setbacks that can impact their success and even force them to withdraw.

I believe strongly that PCC's Disability Services truly does care, advocate, and educate students, but they can only do so much when they don't have the resources they need to adequately support students with disabilities. At PCC, they don't even have a physical site for students to visit, and disability services are found exclusively online.

Oregon must take responsibility for ensuring its colleges and universities provide equitable access for all students. SB 979 is a critical step in

ensuring that students with disabilities can access and succeed in Oregon's public colleges and universities.

I urge you to support SB 979. Thank you.