

Dear Chair Senator Frederick, Vice-Chair Senator Weber, and Members of the Senate Committee on Education:

My name is Addie Wielenga, and I am a student in the Career and Community Studies Program at PSU. I am writing to you in support of **Senate Bill 977 to create college programs for youth with intellectual disability.**

I am asking you to vote yes on Senate Bill 977 which will change lives by sustaining PSU's CCS program AND expanding inclusive college options at community colleges across Oregon. The CCS program is a game changer for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities because it provides the support needed for inclusion in coursework at PSU. It also helps with career development and employment, leading to a career pathway in an area of my interest

I want to thank the Senate Committee on Education for sponsoring SB 977. The Senate Committee on Education has an opportunity to change the lives of many Oregon youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities by passing this bill.

Until Portland State University created the Career and Community Studies Program, I did not have an opportunity to enroll in postsecondary education and experience inclusive social engagement and independent living in the state of Oregon because of my intellectual and developmental disability. All of which lead to competitive integrated employment.

When I was leaving special education, I faced many "no's" from others who did not think it was possible to attend a postsecondary program like CCS. I graduated from Portland Public School's Community Transition Program, and I knew that I wanted to go to college, too. I was really nervous about attending college because it was going to be a whole new experience for me. I would live alone for the first time, and generally do things I had not done before. The CCS program helped me transition to the new experience, and I am so glad I am here.

The CCS program is a game changer for me because it provides the support needed for inclusion in coursework at PSU. This support is provided in a variety of ways, including through academic coaching and by modifying the syllabus to show what I know in classes. The CCS program helps me to succeed in my classes.

The CCS program also helps me with career development and employment, leading to a career pathway in an area of my interest. I work while going to school and receive career counseling to help me achieve employment goals. Right now I am working at Portland State University's student recreation center! I clean equipment, clean floors, restock towels, and monitor students while they use the equipment and work out. I have met a lot of people there, and enjoy talking to people at the gym

while I work. In the future, I want to work in special education classes as a paraeducator, and my classes help me towards this goal.

This bill is a huge step towards something that would help others like me to lead fully productive and inclusive adult lives. CCS has very high rates of post-program employment and this makes it a good economic investment for Oregon.

Senate Bill 977 will change lives by sustaining PSU's CCS program AND expanding inclusive college options at community colleges across Oregon.

I ask the Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Education to vote yes on Senate Bill 977.

Thank you for your time and service to the people of Oregon.

Sincerely,

Addie Wielenga