

Carson Mitchell Testimony for SB 977

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

Hi, I'm **Carson Mitchell**. I am a Junior in the Career and Community Studies program at Portland State University and I am here today on behalf of the CCS program. Today I want to thank the Committee on Education for sponsoring this Bill. I am wondering if you would be willing to support the efforts of passing Bill 977.

I have had experience advocating for the previous bill 572 from 2023 in Salem, Oregon and Washington DC to advance this program to other higher education institutions in the state of Oregon.

572 was our bill number two years now it's 977 it's building a foundation for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities



This is my second time in a capitol building in Oregon doing something like this. This has changed my life outlook on what advocating means to me. When this new bill was introduced after the failure of SB 572, I was excited to be able to advocate for this program once again.

Here is a photo of myself advocating for this program two years ago.

From the time I began advocating for students and staff of the CCS program. It has been an honor and a privilege to advocate for this incredible program and the many opportunities I have gotten to advocate for other things.

We are asking first and foremost for your help to make this happen and get some extra funding to bring in new freshman through senior year and to help develop these young people.

The students who are in this program need your help to expand inclusive post secondary education to community colleges in Oregon to first time college students who have intellectual and developmental disabilities and to give students like me a second chance to succeed in life.

From my first time speaking to the chairman in Salem I gave a testimony about having a highschool teacher tell me that I wasn't good enough to get into a 4 year program and that no college or job would accept me due to my learning disability which really put fear in my way and I fought hard to have my voice and my thoughts heard clearly. I also had been held back by a lot of people, family, some friends, and other relatives who didn't see my success first hand.

Shortly after I worked for the Hillsboro Hops and before that I coached basketball at YMCA in Beaverton. I proved to people who told me or anyone else around me that they won't be able to do this that we can and will.

- Portland State University is a school that I have called home for three years, and maybe more. This college is a school that all students call home and also call family.

The CCS program is a transition program that staff run to help students get a job. They also give you the strongest help to achieve your goals and dreams. It is a program for adults like me who have disabilities and I would love to have you partner with us to get this bill passed.

- This Bill is something that would be life changing for us students and staff of CCS and this bill would give us students and staff leverage to expand and upgrade including to add more students.

This bill is a huge step towards something that would help students like me and so many other students in the CCS program and beyond.

The question that I need to ask is would you please help us get this bill passed? This would also help to spread the program for many others.

Thank you on the behalf of Portland State and the CCS program.

Sincerely, Carson Mitchell

