

Please Support Senate Bill 977 – Creating Opportunities for Youth with Disabilities

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

My name is Will Lasron, and I am a graduate of the Career and Community Studies Program at Portland State University. I am writing to ask for your support of Senate Bill 977, a bill that will **create more college programs for youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities**. Career and Community Studies at Portland State University helped me so much in ways of self advocacy and independence. Since I graduated from PSU, I have accomplished a lot. I have a job working in Portland Public schools in Nutrition services and I do part time volunteering as a Teacher's assistant. The experience I had at PSU through the Career and Community Studies program changed my life. I support this legislation because having programs like CCS empowers youth to be more active in the community and Achieve their potential.

Il want to start by thanking the Senate Committee on Education for sponsoring this important bill. If passed, Senate Bill 977 will help change the lives of many young people with disabilities by providing more opportunities for them to succeed in higher education and enter the workforce.

Before the CCS program at PSU, I didn't have any real opportunities to attend college or experience the social and independent living skills that are so important. The CCS program has been life-changing for me. It gives me the support I need to participate in classes and succeed academically. With the help of academic coaching and syllabus modifications, I am able to show my knowledge and succeed in coursework. It also gives me the career development I need to move forward in my job search and future career.

When I left special education, I faced a lot of "no's" from people who didn't think I could attend a program like CCS. But CCS has proven them wrong, and now I am working at [TELL WHERE YOU WORK AND YOUR ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES AT WORK], gaining real-world experience and building my future.

Senate Bill 977 is crucial for expanding inclusive educational opportunities across Oregon. The CCS program has helped me and many others, and its high employment rates after completion show the program's positive impact. Please vote yes on Senate Bill 977, and help ensure that students with disabilities have the chance to succeed in college and in life.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to improving education in Oregon.

Sincerely,

William Larson Email: Will.laron7@gmail.com