

Antonio E. Contreras  
1307 102<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE, Ste D, Box 163  
Portland, Oregon 97220

March 17, 2025

**Re: SB977**

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

My name is Antonio E. Contreras. I am 26 years old. I am originally from San Francisco, California. I moved here to Oregon last August from Atlanta, Georgia.

I went to college at Georgia Tech for four years in the Excel Program for students with intellectual disabilities.

When I was in high school in California, all of my friends were applying to college. I wanted to go to college, too, but my mom said that because I had an intellectual disability, that I wouldn't be able to go to college like my friends. But I kept telling my mom that I wanted to go to college too, so she googled it.

We found out that there were only 20 colleges in the United States that had a four-year program for students like me. Portland State was the only four-year program for students with intellectual disability on the west coast. Back then, Portland State only took students from Oregon, and I lived in California, so I could not come to college here.

I got accepted to the programs at Syracuse in New York and Georgia Tech in Georgia. I chose Georgia Tech because it snows in New York, but it doesn't snow in Georgia.

I loved going to college! I lived with roommates and some of them had disabilities and some of them didn't have disabilities. I went to classes and had a tutor to help me learn. I had a lot of jobs and internships. I worked as a front desk assistant at LA Fitness, an office assistant at Decatur Co-Works, and as a pool assistant and server assistant at Ansley Golf Club. They had free food at Ansley golf club for employees!

I went to Georgia Tech basketball games and football games with my friends. The best thing about going to college was that I could live with my friends, and I didn't have to live with my parents.

Today I work 40 hours a week as a janitor at the airport here in Portland. I like jobs where I can move around and not sit still all day. I am saving up money so that I can get my own apartment.

College helped me learn how to live and work independently. I think everyone who has an intellectual disability should be able to go to college, just like me.

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I support Senate Bill 977.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Antonio". The letters are cursive and slightly slanted to the right.

Antonio E. Contreras  
Self-Advocate