

Dear members of the education committee,

My name is Nick Keough (they/he) and I am a student at the University of Oregon as well as a member of ASUO Student Government!

Today, I am asking you to vote yes on HB 3012 which will strengthen the existing legislation allowing student control over the student incidental fee.

Our campus student fee is so vital to students, and meets the needs of students in a unique way because it is the only source of revenue that students have democratic control over. Some of the amazing services and groups that the fee funds on my campus are the LTD bus pass, all our student clubs and organizations, important departments on campus, keeps the lights on and the rent paid in the EMU, paying student wages, and so much more!

That's why this bill is so important to me. On the UO campus and during my time at LCC, this has been my experience: it is common for the administration to block I-fee decisions that do not align with their bottom line, often with very little justification. For instance, when the pandemic first hit the ASUO saw a lot of value in getting students money back in their pockets with an I-fee refund. We wanted to do this because we acknowledged the economic crisis that was impending and wanted to help students any way we could. After months of work, the ASUO finally settled on a \$15 dollar refund per student. It was the most that we could do while still being fiscally responsible with our budget as we knew that enrollment would likely be going down next year. In the end, admin immediately blocked it with absolutely no justification beyond saying they didn't agree with it and students received no refund or money back. We were extremely upset, students were extremely upset, and it highlighted to us all that currently how the I-fee process is structured only gives students an almost pseudo-autonomy over the I-fee, instead of concrete autonomy. I don't believe this was the original intention of the legislature, so I really hope to see this bill pass because students deserve it! Our Campus Student Fee processes are culturally enriching, educational, democratic, transparent and fiscally responsible. To preserve and uphold these values, we need to make some clarifications within existing statute. Please vote yes on HB 3012, and thank you for your time!

Here is further reading on that incident:

https://www.dailyemerald.com/news/university-administration-denies-asuo-attempt-to-refund-15-incidental-fee/article_52918cce-c60e-11ea-9b0d-b737ac988c6e.html

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