

Dear Chair Dembrow and Members of the Committee,

My name is Dr. Mary Ann M. DeMario and I am a subject matter expert on college students who are parents. I live in New York State and I am writing today in support of SB 564.

Currently, Oregon lacks comprehensive data to indicate the number of college students that are also parents. This lack of data creates a significant barrier to making appropriate determinations about the specific educational needs and outcomes of student parents.

Identifying this key demographic information will allow institutions to best determine the proper allocation of resources that seek to increase access to higher education for student parents and support them in the completion of their degrees.

This matters to me because I know the power that Student-Parent data has. The SUNY (State University of New York) institution I work for, Monroe Community College, has collected data on our students' marital and parental status since 2003. My analyses of that data has helped change policy in my state and at the federal level. It has also shown that more than 90% of Monroe's Student-Parents who are single moms live below the poverty line. Being able to collect Student-Parent data is the key to unlocking the potential of this population. More than one in five college students nationwide is a Student-Parent.

All students deserve to have the programs they need in order to succeed academically and Senate Bill 564 is the first step towards making this possible. This is why I urge you to support SB 564.

Thank you to Senator Gelser for championing this bill and to Chair Dembrow for sponsoring it. Thank you to the committee for this opportunity to submit my testimony in support of SB 564.

Sincerely,

Mary Ann M. DeMario, Ph.D.
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