

Hello, Chair Alonso Leon and members of the House Education Committee,

For the record, my name is Eleazar Gamez and I am a policy coordinator intern for the Oregon Student Association, as well as a student at Portland State University.

It is without a doubt that college tuition continues to rise at an alarming rate. And even less of a surprise that the rise in cost to obtain a college degree, whether it's an associate's or a bachelor's degree, either determine whether a student can or can not afford to attend school.

Please, take a moment to look back at when you were in college, did you struggle financially along the way to pay for tuition and fees? Furthermore, were you in a place in which you had to decide whether or not you needed to consider attending a different institution than the one you were considering, or the one you were already attending because the financial cost was too heavy? Well, these questions are similar to what students experience today--with the exception that now students are burdened with nearly 75% of the cost of running an institution, as opposed to decades ago when the State shouldered that responsibility.

We all know the story of the financial cost and its impact on the student population today. But really, if students are shouldering this cost--why do we not have clear access as to where our tuition and fee revenue goes on campus? We know we pay a lot each term for our courses, books, class supplies such as pens and notebooks to help us succeed right? But how much do we really know on how the fee money each student pays is properly and adequately used? There are fees that we as students pay, such as building fees, rec center fees, technology fees, and so forth. However, exactly in what way is the technology fee actually used term after term? Does administration charge students only the cost it takes to upkeep technological service, do they charge more in order to create a reserve in case of an emergency, or do they supplement certain funds to other areas on campus? Currently, as a student, I couldn't begin to answer this question. Which is why I am here asking you all to pass HB2542 which would allow me to answer those basic questions considering these funds are filled solely by students, like myself.

This bill is crucial to help maintain transparency between institutions and college students. It is a right that the very students who are paid for all of these different fees to also know the exact way on which each dollar they pay for each fee is properly being used. I mean let's face it, each month when you pay your mobile phone service bill, you know exactly what service you are paying for. It's not as if you're paying x amount of dollars to your service provider for "phone service". There is transparency in both yourself and the phone provider each month in where you know what phone service plan you have and what you are paying for.

That is the exact transparency we need across the state for all institutions to their students. College students and their families need to know how each of the fees they are charged each month and each term are being used. And while I have your attention, I would like to see more transparency around all university finances, but I recognize this is a process and I think the disclosure of mandatory fees is a small, but powerful place to start. It also allows incoming college students to decide on what institution to attend based on the tuition costs, fee costs, and what works best for their financial situation. Furthermore, this really should not be a challenge for institutions to follow. The information on how the fees they charge students each term are being used should be information they have readily available. It's not as if they need to do excess work following these funds and if it is that difficult to gather this information--it's quite alarming may I say. All I ask for is transparency.

**Thank you for taking the time to hear from myself and fellow students and I urge your yes vote on HB2542.**