



PETER COURTNEY
President of the Senate

Senate Education and Workforce Development

Senator Mark Hass, Chair
Senator Tim Knopp, Vice-Chair
Senator Lee Beyer
Senator Arnie Roblan
Senator Jeff Kruse

TESTIMONY BY SENATOR PETER COURTNEY
SUPPORTING HB 2787
MARCH 18, 2013

Chair Hass, Vice Chair Knopp, and members of the Education and Workforce Development Committee: thank you for hearing my testimony today in support of House Bill 2787. My name is Peter Courtney. I am a State Senator, and I live in NE Salem. I represent the good people of District 11 which includes Woodburn, Gervais, and east Salem.

This session marks the 10 year anniversary of this bill's existence in Oregon's state legislature. In 2003, I was asked to introduce a tuition equity measure by the principal of Woodburn High School. I introduced SB 10.

In the 2011 Regular Session, the Senate again passed this measure as SB 742 -- by an 18-11 bipartisan vote. Both times, however, it died in the House committee. This year, we started in the House where it passed 38-18.

I've said it before: the only thing wrong with kids is adults. And this bill is about kids -- who are where they are because of adults. These kids are in every one of our high schools. My kids are your kids and your kids are my kids. Together they're our kids; they're Oregon kids.

This bill would allow undocumented kids to qualify for in-state tuition if they have:

- Graduated from an Oregon high school;
- Been accepted to an Oregon university;
- Gone to Oregon schools for at least 3 years;
- Lived in the U.S. for at least 5 years;
- Demonstrated intent to become a citizen; and
- Are the dependent of a non-citizen.

Oregon high school graduates who have the grades and aptitude to be accepted at a university or college should have the chance to attain a quality post-secondary education. The current cost is extremely prohibitive for immigrant students because we require them to pay international

student tuition / out of state tuition. Today, four years at the University of Oregon, on average costs:

In state: \$37,032
Out of state: \$114,612
Difference: \$77,580

And that is only tuition and fees – it does not include other necessary expenses like room, board, books, or computers. Having them pay in-state tuition would be additional revenue for Oregon colleges and universities. The Oregon University System estimates that about 38 students would take advantage of this new opportunity in the 2013-15 biennium and 80 students in 2015-17. These students would generate an additional \$335,000 in 2013-15 and \$1.5 million in 2015-17 for the universities in tuition revenue. Oregon can only benefit by making education more attainable for these students.

We've planted the seeds of greatness within these students during high school. Let's allow them to access higher education, see them through to fruition, and add to Oregon's abundant resources.

Please understand this bill does not guarantee these kids admission to a college or university. It does not guarantee them a degree. It simply gives them a path – a path to opportunity, a path to the American dream, a path to being a taxpayer, a path to greatness, and a path to being a contributor to our economy in the light of day, not relegated to the shadows.

All we're trying to do is ensure that these young people are not punished for the actions of their parents.

Fourteen other states have approved tuition equity in some form to date: Washington, California, Utah, New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska, Illinois, New York, Connecticut, Wisconsin, Rhode Island, and Maryland. Together, I hope we can make Oregon the 15th. I respectfully request that you support this bill. The kids are counting on you. Thank you.