

Chair Haas and Members of the Committee:

My name is Lorena Landeros and I am here to voice my support for Tuition Equity.

I've had the privilege of living in the state of Oregon since I was six. My parents brought me to this great country in search of opportunities for themselves, but also for a bright future for me and my siblings. Growing up, I was able to take advantage of these opportunities by working hard, getting good grades, playing sports and working to support myself and my family. When it came time to seriously consider my future, I knew that getting a college degree was my option for getting ahead in life and being successful. With the support of my family, friends and community I ended up at the University of Oregon with a full tuition scholarship and graduated in 2008 with a BA in Ethnic Studies and Spanish.

My story is no different than the students we're here advocating for today. These students are told day in and day out that if they work hard, they will succeed in life. So they do, they take challenging classes and play on their High School sports teams. They help support their family and look after their siblings. But they are denied the opportunity to pursue a higher education because of something they had no control over. Their parents, just like mine, wanted something better for them. A better life and a better future and through no fault of theirs, they're being priced out and being told no.

I currently work for the University of Oregon as an Admissions Counselor. My job is to recruit Oregon students to attend the University of Oregon. My recruiting areas are Yamhill, Polk and Marion Counties. These counties include schools like the Woodburn High School Academies, McKay High School, McMinnville High School and Newberg High School. Many of the schools in these counties are rural and have high population of Latino students. I can't think of one high school that I've visited this year where I haven't had one student talk to me about being undocumented and wanting to attend the University of Oregon, most of them having received

their DACA documents. Nothing is harder for me than having to tell them no. No, they don't qualify for in-state tuition. No, we don't have any other options for them. These are high achieving students with the 4.00 GPA's, these are students who have shown their success in the class room. These are students that should be in our classrooms. And we're telling them no.

Tuition Equity can only help our state succeed. Our state will grow by capitalizing on Oregon's investment in these students who have gone through our K-12 system. Tuition Equity can help guarantee that every Oregonian has fair access to quality, affordable higher education. Tuition Equity isn't a free pass, these students have already worked hard for their diploma. Tuition Equity doesn't cost the state anything, doesn't favor any groups and is fully compliant with federal law.

I've worked on Tuition Equity since I first found out about it in Fall of 2003, when it first failed. 10 years later we're still talking about it. It's heartbreaking to think about the students who haven't been able to pursue their education because this bill failed in 2003 and 2005 and 2009 and 2011. I hope we don't add 2013 to that list. Please do the right thing. All students need to know that they are an important part of Oregon's community. And Tuition Equality sends exactly that, a message that everyone is valued. Please support Tuition Equity.

Thank you.