



**To:** Senate Higher Education Committee  
**From:** Vince Jones, Health and Science School, Beaverton, Oregon  
**Date:** March 19th, 2013  
**Re:** Testimony in Support of Tuition Equity

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Chair Hass and Members of the Committee:

I am writing you today to encourage you to vote in favor of Tuition Equity that will let all Oregon residents have equal access and in-state tuition to college and universities in our state. As an educator in Beaverton for nineteen years, I have personally seen how discouraging the present denial of in state residency tuition on undocumented youth can be on their psyche, motivation to graduate from high school, and ability to pursue their career goals.

In December 2010, the Beaverton School Board unanimously passed a resolution in support of federal and state legislators to “support the Dream Act and any related legislation that provides qualified immigrant students with a pathway to legal residence and completion of their education.” Many brave families and students came that night to testify at the school board meeting and described the crippling impacts of these restrictions on their families. A mother testified how one of her sons, who was brought here at the age of three, quit attending Aloha High School after realizing he could not go to college. She also spoke how difficult it was to have him watch his siblings, all American born, have the right to a job, driver’s license, and college while he was stuck in the shadows.

Another grandmother described how unfair it was that some of her grandchildren have opportunities and others do not based solely on her daughter’s decision to leave Mexico. It was sobering to hear a high school senior who was an athlete with a 3.5 grade point average testify that “He was nightly looking to see if Congress would pass the Dream Act” and how painful it was to come to the realization that it was not to be. These families are hard working and give much to us in terms of low paying, hard labor. Their children, who I and many others teach, should not be lied to and told “Try hard and in America you will succeed” because in their lives, as one undocumented student told me, “Those who graduate from Westview and those who don’t all ended up doing the same landscaping work at the same pay.”

As a former resident and teacher in Texas, I can hope that Oregon should follow its lead and pass legislation similar to Texas Dream Act passed in 2001. The law has been both successful and popular with the public and passed in the Senate with zero no votes. It has reduced the drop out rate, encouraged access to college in a population that has faced many obstacles, and has come at very little expense.

I would hope that Oregon passes this legislation so I can tell **all** my students that they will achieve their dreams and aspirations by working hard at school. Now all I can say when a student tells me he or she is undocumented is that their education is something that no one can ever take away from them. They deserve more than this.

Thank you very much, and please pass tuition equity now!