

Regarding HB 5031, Higher Education Funding

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE JOINT WAYS AND MEANS SUBCOMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Dannelle Stice, University of Oregon Student

Peter Stice, Southern Oregon University Student

March 27, 2013

Co-Chair Monroe, Co-Chair Komp, and Committee Members,

For the record, I am Dannelle Stice. I will start at UO next term after completing my transfer degree at Lane Community College, and this is my brother Peter Stice, who is finishing his final year at Southern Oregon University. We are both from the small eastern Oregon town of Umatilla.

\$748 We appear before you here today to ask you to fund the Oregon University system at a level of ~~\$1.2~~ million for several reasons. The first is that our big brother begged us to. In the interest of full disclosure, he works for the University of Oregon and is the one pacing in the back of the room. The second is that our family above all else values opportunity. Peter and I are just two of eleven Stice children. Our parents, in their kindness (some might say their craziness), have adopted a total of eight children and fostered many more. Peter and I are both adopted.

Our parents adopted us and gave us a chance to succeed, and Peter and I are both capitalizing on that opportunity. We both worked hard during high school and have managed to get into college. We overcame the odds. Education attainment levels among adopted and foster children are far lower on average than attainment levels for biological children. Adopted and foster children are far more likely to fall into poverty, drug use, and even violence. Unfortunately, we've seen some of our siblings fall prey to this pattern. On top of this, Umatilla is a rural, underperforming school district, with very few students continuing their education after high school and even fewer attaining a degree.

We made it out and to college thanks to the structure that our family provided and personal determination, but the rising price of college and 11 kids has made it difficult for our parents to contribute much to our education financially. Peter and I are both shouldering the bulk of the cost of our higher education. I have no doubt that both of us will succeed in getting a degree, but the high cost of tuition has made it hard. We have both struggled financially at points, at some point barely finding enough money to pay for school and rent. We have both considered taking time off or even dropping out.

I tell our story because Peter and I are very much the kids on the margin, those for whom the opportunities afforded through a higher education will impact the most. We both hope

to be teachers after school. Peter, who is finishing his senior season on the SOU track team, hopes to coach track and cross country, becoming Oregon's next Vin Lannana, and I plan to inspire the next generation of astrophysicists and engineers as a science and math teacher. Had we been priced out of a higher education through another six+ percent tuition increases our lives could have gone in dramatically different directions. That six percent, the tuition increase amount that OUS predicts under the Co-Chairs budget, could have meant the difference between a life as a school teacher and productive citizen or jail—a route we've seen a few of our brothers and sisters take.

We are the kids—the kids on the margin—that you need to think about while making this decision.

Thank you for your time.