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To: Senate Education Committee
From: Phoenix Singer, Associated Students of Portland State University
Re: Support for HB 2995

Senate Education Committee,

My name is Phoenix Singer and I'm a Political Science sophomore and a Diversity Enrichment Scholar at Portland State University. As a student of color on campus I have many needs that other students do not. Many of my peers have historically been excluded from education and even to this day face great disparities within higher education. For Native American students, recruitment and retention rates into postsecondary education is extremely low. Without racial data collection we wouldn't be able to know about various disparities between student populations and our universities wouldn't be able to increase recruitment towards marginalized and underrepresented peoples to increase diversity and create opportunities for all students. The problem is, we don't have just one identity and many people who are underrepresented are not included in data collection for the university.

LGBTQI (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex) people are often underrepresented and marginalized in all aspects of life, including higher education. What HB 2995 would do is begin data collection in universities on LGBTQI students so that we can address disparities within our education system and promote equality. Education is a place of opportunity, where we can gain the knowledge and the skills required to enter the professional world. Being a space of opportunity, it should also be a place where everyone can attend, regardless of race, ethnicity, sexuality, sex, gender identity and class. This is why I'm asking the committee to support HB 2995. This bill is absolutely necessary to access the recruitment and retention rate of underrepresented students across the state. This would be completely optional for students to fill out and student's personal information such as name, would not be made public. It would be added to forms that already exist which ask for other demographic information and this bill is supported by the Oregon University System. We have to provide for all of our students and make sure that we as a state are doing our best to make sure underrepresented and marginalized communities are accessing higher education.

This bill makes sense to me not only as a student of color but as someone who identifies as LGBTQI. It would allow our campuses to access fundamental information as to our recruitment and retention rates, and disparities between student populations. The passage of this bill would mean I wouldn't feel alone and isolated not only within my campus community but the entire student population across the state of Oregon. If education is supposed to be the great equalizer, why don't we take steps to make that true? I ask you to pass HB 2995, for all students.

Respectfully,
Phoenix Singer