

My name is Lamar Wise. I'm a student Senator at the university of oregon and the executive committee chair of the Oregon Student Association. I'm testifying today urging the state legislature to kill SB 270. There are numerous issues with this bill that lead me into my strong urge of opposition.

First off, I'm fearful of not having a tuition cap for both in state and out of state students. And even if there is a 5% cap suggested for in state students, there are multiple ways for the institutional boards to be approved to go above that cap. In addition to that, SB 270 is projected to cost 5 million dollars, which I'm fearful would come from the pockets of students and tax payers. Students already are having a hard time trying to afford college and having no tuition cap has dangerous implications of continuing the trend of skyrocketing tuition. In combination with the projected cost of institutional boards, it is clear to me that this is not the affordable solution for students. This bill signifies to me a surrender. It says to me that there are people out there that has given up on the idea that the state wants an affordable, quality public higher system. The state legislature needs to fight for its higher education and prioritize it once again.

I still believe that the that there are people on this committe and in the state legislature that care about students like me. I myself have had a hard time affording school. Last year I couch surfed for multiple months and saw my bank account with no money. I often had to make the decision between buying food for the week. No student should have to make that decision.

This is to say pulling away from the state does not solve the issue of providing a more accessible and affordable education, and in my opinion that's exactly what we as a state should be doing. It's time for the legislature to have real conversations on what 40-40-20 is supposed to look like. And I don't believe moving towards a more business-like model is the right answer for Oregon's public higher education.

I think as a state we can do better. We need to have tuition setting power be with our elected officials so that we as students can hold them accountable. We need to have a state wide coordinated system of education so that we can use our resources the best way we can. And we need to have a funding model that is advantageous to all students that attend Oregon public schools.

I know the system that we currently have is not the best, but I believe having institutional boards sets the wrong tone for where we want to be as Oregon in our pursuit to obtaining quality affordable education.

I thank you for your consideration of my testimony.

Lamar Wise
ASUO Senator
OSA Executive Committee chair