

Stephanie Keaveney

Testimony to the Joint Subcommittee on Education

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Good morning co-Chairs Komp, Monroe and other distinguished committee members. My name is Stephanie Keaveney and I am the student body vice president at Southern Oregon University.

I am here today to urge you to oppose Senate Bill 270-A. Students at SOU are very concerned with the effects that institutional governing boards could have on our educational experience. We are already facing astronomical tuition raises each year which are discouraging Oregonians from seeking a higher education. We cannot afford to place additional financial burden on the backs of students.

And that's exactly what these institutional boards may do. . With the potential cost to implement at a time when Oregon's investment in universities is one of the lowest in the nation, these boards will divert resources from the core activity of student education. They will do very little to increase the educational attainment of Oregonians to meet the state's 40-40-20 goal.

Being a student at a regional university, the implications of governing boards are especially concerning. Without clarity on how boards will share services and work together, my university could be at an extreme disadvantage. Southern Oregon University is in a region that is especially economically disadvantaged, and we must keep our costs low in order to continue to serve the Oregonians who were born and raised in Southern Oregon.

We have been told that institutional boards will guarantee an increase of philanthropy at our schools and that these boards would serve to allow helpful and effective advice to our institution's president. but we have not found national data that verifies this. . Students see no direct benefit to

institutional boards. (Note: The bill currently allows for representation from faculty and students but does not have a seat for staff.)

We believe that the key to efficiency is a streamlined higher education system but SB 270-A will only serve to add another layer of Bureaucracy and another expense that will not be funded by the state.. This will limit the access to higher education for Oregonians. It should be our top priority to make a college education affordable and accessible to all Oregonians and SB 270-A clearly does not achieve that priority.

Please oppose SB 270-A.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak here today.