



Human Services and Housing Committee

Amelia Harris, ASOSU President and OSA Vice Chair
18 February 2013

Re: HB 2674

Chair Tomei and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Amelia Harris, and I am President of the Associated Students of Oregon State University and the Vice Chair of the Oregon Student Association Board of Directors. OSA is comprised of elected student leaders from Oregon's public colleges and universities, and represents more than 100,000 students. ASOSU and OSA believe that every Oregonian deserves access to an affordable, quality college education, and that students should be involved in decisions that affect them.

People with physical disabilities face significant challenges to being successful students at Oregon's public universities and colleges because these institutions are not accessible to them. HB 2674 is an important piece of legislation as people with disabilities are significantly less likely to get a degree from a community college or university than the non-disabled population. In fact, only 13.9 percent of people with disabilities have a bachelor's degree or higher, significantly less than the 31.7 percent of the non-disabled that have at least one. In addition, people with disabilities have significantly lower graduation rates in high school, community college, and university. Only 21.5 percent of people with disabilities have jobs, although 64.4 percent of people without disabilities are employed.

If Oregon is to achieve its goal of 40-40-20, then the public universities and community colleges in Oregon must be accessible to all Oregonians. For this reason, we believe that this Legislature Oregon needs to prioritize funding for accessibility-related improvements for capital construction projects. . This is not about a one percent cost increase for every single new building or building improvements. This is about effectively directing the scarce financial resources of the State to get people into the classroom so that every person is able to access Oregon's public universities and community colleges.

ASOSU and OSA support the passage of HB 2674 contingent upon dispersement of funds to only those departments with a transition plan that complies with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today.