

TESTIMONY OF RICHARD F. LAMOUNTAIN
HOUSE BILL 2787
HIGHER EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
OREGON HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
FEBRUARY 13, 2013

Gentlemen, thank you for the chance to testify. My name is Richard LaMountain. I live in Washington County.

Please oppose House Bill 2787. "Tuition equity" is a misnomer. Granting in-state tuition to young people here illegally would give them chances not equal, but in many cases superior, to those of American citizens seeking the same educational and professional opportunities.

In this debate, few have raised the issue of affirmative action. Most of the illegal immigrants this bill favors would qualify as federal "protected minorities" -- and, thereby, for affirmative-action preferences over those who do not qualify as such, including the majority of American citizens. These preferences would enable illegal immigrants who were helped into an Oregon university by in-state tuition to compete with and, in many cases, to beat American citizens for positions in post-graduate academic and professional programs over the course of their entire lives.

Affirmative action originally was intended to assure that black American citizens, after decades of suppression, would have access to educational and occupational opportunities. It would pervert that intent to give foreign citizens, especially those here illegally, the in-state tuition that would enable the vast majority of them to access, in turn, the affirmative-action preferences that would give them a competitive edge over American citizens long into the future.

Please remember: Whatever the circumstances of an illegal immigrant's arrival in this country, our nation's foremost responsibility is to its own people -- its own citizens. House Bill 2787 would violate that responsibility.

Gentlemen, the session is barely into its second week, yet you've scheduled a work session on the bill for this Friday. I urge you: on Friday, do not vote to send this bill to the House floor. This early in the session very few Oregonians are yet tuned in, and most don't even know this bill has been introduced. Many of them ultimately may wish to weigh in with you on this issue, and they have a right to do so. So out of respect for your constituents, for the democratic process, and for your own deliberative responsibilities, please vote on this bill not this Friday but later in the session.

Thank you.

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