



OREGON DREAMACTIVIST



To: Senate Education Committee
From: Patricia Cruz, Oregon community college student
Date: March 19th, 2013
Re: Testimony in Support of Tuition Equity

Chair Hass and Members of the Committee,

My name is Patricia Cruz, and I am here today to ask for your support of Tuition Equity legislation. Thank you very much for hearing my testimony today.

I have lived in Portland, Oregon for 20 years and have studied in the Portland Public schools from Kindergarten through high school. In high school, I was able to take a class at Portland Community College and a senior inquiry classes at PSU. My grades were above average, and I was able to make my parents proud by graduating with honors. However, none of these things mattered because universities rejected me before I had even applied; all I had to say was: "I am undocumented." The universities that had an interest on me were private colleges that I could not afford. By Winter term, I had given up and my teachers began to question why I had not applied for schools.

In high school, I also participated in extracurricular activities that would help me develop skills that I could use to help my community. I mentored Ockley Green middle school students, many of whom have now graduated from high school and moved on to universities. I was part of the first team of high school students at Jefferson High school to help with the Carbon Footprint Fair. I also joined the Mock Trial team after school to compete with other Oregon high school Mock Trial teams. Like most High school students, these extracurricular activities helped to build my college application resume. My hope was that universities could see the effort that I had put into, not only into my education, but also towards my community and would accept my enrollment into their university.

However, that was not possible since I am undocumented and was not considered an Oregon resident, meaning I would have to pay out-of-state tuition. As a senior in high school, my higher education aspirations dimmed and started to seem like an unattainable goal.

For the undocumented students who are attending Oregon high schools at this moment though, who want to achieve their goal of higher education, a new opportunity can be opened for them this year. Tuition Equity would allow student to apply and pay in-state tuition if they have attended an Oregon high school for a minimum of three years. Oregon has the opportunity to join the growing number of States that have in-state tuition for undocumented students. In-state tuition gives undocumented

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students a fighting chance to attend a university or college. I want every young person who has been a student in Oregon to have the same opportunities to pay in-state tuition.

Every student who has grown up in Oregon should be given the chance to be an Oregon Duck, or Beaver, or anything else they dream of being. My goals, aspirations and dreams of obtaining a higher education is the same as every Oregon student, so please let us know that we are worth it by passing Tuition Equity this session.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to present my testimony, and I respectfully ask you to vote “yes” for tuition equity.

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