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Chair Harker, Vice Chairs Gallegos & Huffman and Members of the Committee,

For the record my name is Eric Noll and I serve as the Chair of the Oregon Student Association Board of Directors. Thank you for your time this morning and I'll be testifying in favor of House Bill 4147.

I want to address the necessity of the components in this bill by discussing the history of student voting seats and the importance of student involvement on a statewide level. Students are legitimate stakeholders, financial and otherwise, in the shared governance of our state.

Oregon students have played a critical role in the changing landscape of higher education in Oregon as valuable voting members of the State Board of Education and the State Board of Higher Education, the Oregon Student Access Commission, many statewide work-groups, and in the prior incarnation of the Higher Education Coordinating Commission. My colleagues will discuss the necessity of continuing and expanding this trope through HB 4147, in their respective testimonies.

At community colleges in Oregon students have become the plurality financial stakeholders and in some cases, like all Oregon public universities, the majority financial stakeholders. Due to this development over the last decade (of tuition increases that have far exceeded inflation) students are shouldering the bulk of our institutions' operating costs and therefore should be significant decision makers in the governance of our institutions and public post-secondary education. In addition to tuition payments, students are contributing to their institutions' operating budgets through one, the State General fund from income taxes on the job(s) they work to pay for their education and two, through property taxes either from their home or rent payments.

Students will continue to make a very strong argument based on these principles that we are valid decision makers and participants in statewide and institution specific shared governance.

We continue to hear from this legislature how important it is to have 'student voices' in the room or to hear from the 'student perspective' and we very much appreciate the sentiment. However, in this 2014 session this legislative assembly has the opportunity to move beyond sentiment and recognize the validity and legitimacy of not just student voice, but student influence in statewide and institution decision making. This committee, by a do-pass recommendation, can continue to affirm yourselves as higher education allies in Oregon and encourage your colleagues in the building to take action and validate students as well. That said, I strongly urge the passage of House Bill 4147.

Thank you for your time and I will take questions from the Committee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eric Noll', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Eric Noll

Chair, OSA Board of Directors