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Hearing for SB 473 LGBTQ Data Collection
February 26th, 2015
Jacq Allen, Oregon State University

Chair Roblan, Vice Chair Knopp, and members of the committee,

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide my testimony today. My name is Jacq Allen I study Public Health at Oregon State University and work on campus with SOL: The LGBTQ Multicultural Support Network as well as sit on the board for Oregon Student Equal Rights Alliance (OSERA). I am here today to urging your support for Senate Bill 473.

When I first started college at OSU 3 years ago I was given information on how I could get involved with the different cultural resource centers like the Native American Longhouse and the Black Cultural Center as well as student groups that supported my academic major. This was all great because as a Native American and Black identified student I was able to find cultural connectedness in a new unfamiliar place. I did not have to go out and seek this information but received friendly and helpful outreach. One area of my identity that I never received information about was that I identify as Lesbian. No information was given to me about the resources or support for LGBTQ students and for my first year at OSU I believed there was no LGBTQ community. I closeted myself out of fear for my safety. It wasn't until after my first year when I "outed" myself and was attacked on campus by a graduate teaching assistant that I was referred to the Pride Center and other LGBTQ organizations. Although I am happy to have found those resources then the whole situation would have been less traumatic if I already had those relationships and recourses.

Instances like mine are not isolated in Oregon on college campuses and without LGBTQ data collection it will be impossible for universities to know how to affectively support and provide recourse to these students. Currently we are an invisible population because there is no data to show our representation. This is why it is vital for data collection to happen at higher education institutions and I ask that you support SB 473.

Thank you for your time.

Jacq Allen