



Associated Students of Oregon State University

Office of the President – Taylor D. Sarman

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The Honorable Arnie Roblan, Chair
Senate Education Committee
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

RE: Senate Bill 473

Dear Chair Roblan:

When I was elected Student Body President at Oregon State University, I committed to making sure that the voices of all students, especially those who feel invisible, were heard on our campus and in Salem. Passage of Senate Bill 473, undoubtedly, will help LGBTQ students and staff to feel a sense of community and serve as a reminder that our identities are not invisible.

As a member of the LGBTQ community, I can recall several occasions where I have had the opportunity to self identify my race, gender, and ethnicity; however, not once have I been able to officially express my identity in the LGBTQ community—an important aspect of my identity. For me, and for fellow LGBTQ students and staff, these experiences leave me feeling invisible and invalidated. Historically, those who identify as LGBTQ have been pushed to the margins of society, and SB 473 is crucial in helping my peers feel like our identities are not marginalized.

Anecdotally, we know that societal discrimination and hetero-normative aggressions have adverse impacts on LGBTQ student's academics; however, without the collection of data based on these identities, we are unable to provide adequate services and support to LGBTQ students at Oregon's institutions of higher education. SB 473 would provide institutions with the necessary information to further support a growing population of students on our campuses.

Additionally, SB 473, specifically section two, sends a message of safety and validity to the members our community who identify as transgender or gender non-conforming. Safety and validation are critical in a place where student's main focus should be on their education and not their oppressed identities. Furthermore, many transgender and gender non-conforming individuals suffer from anxiety, depression, and post traumatic stress disorder, and for many, the use of their legal first name is a trigger for these types of mental illness—especially when it is used in front of a classroom full of their peers. Passage of SB 473 will not only recognize and value the identities of our transgender-identified students, but it will also help to alleviate further instances where members of our community feel ostracized.

I express my appreciation to Senator Gelser and Representative Nosse for their leadership in advocacy for a community in which I am proud to call my own. SB 473 gives me hope that we can keep working to make sure that members of the LGBTQ community feel safe, validated, and celebrated in the Great State of Oregon.

Sincerely,

Taylor D. Sarman

Cc:

Senator Herman Baertschiger Jr.

Senator Lee Beyer

Senator Sara Gelser

Senator Mark Hass

Senator Tim Knopp (Vice-Chair)

Senator Jeff Kruse