



635 NE Dekum St, Portland, OR, 97211 | (503) 286-0477 | [www.orstudents.org](http://www.orstudents.org) | @OregonStudents

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

My name is Heath Oltman. I am here asking for you to support SB 473. I am a sophomore at Lane Community College and I'm majoring in Pre-Pharmacy. I am representing the Oregon Student Association and OSERA.

This bill is incredibly important to so many LGBTQ students in Oregon. This bill will bring us closer to being a visible community on our campus. Most professors and instructors on campus don't realize how many of LGBTQ students attend their classes and don't feel it necessary to create inclusive lectures and discussions. Psychology and speech classes often delve into the subject of relationships, and while I am comfortable in discussing my relationship experiences, the curriculum covered is nearly always centered around straight people and their relationships. I don't mind these discussions, but when the subject for an entire two weeks is about relationships between heterosexual people, and it doesn't come around to discuss same gender relationships, it's oppressive and I realize how invisible my community really is on campus and in our classes.

There are challenges that LGBTQ students encounter on campus because of the lack of visibility. I have personally witnessed LGBTQ students be forced into unsafe environments because their identities are not respected in campus spaces. Instructors are often unaware of the broad diversity their own campuses hold and this has left them without the tools and resources to support the LGBTQ students they have. There is a painful lack of resources for transgender students on campus as well such as accessible inclusive bathrooms. Just going to the bathroom is a reminder for many of us that our lives and struggles are invisible to the institution we put time, money, and pride into.

Often we end up educating our professors about our identities and our existence because of our invisibility on campus. Many of instructors are very surprised to learn that a student uses gender neutral pronouns and need to be informed of what a gender neutral pronoun is. Ideally this would be an easy change to make for an instructor, but is too often disregarded a week or two into the term. A preference to use a name other than a legally given one is too often forgotten and ignored. Some of us are doing our best to escape what our given names mean to us and are constantly being reminded why we wish we could go by a different name in the first place. It comes to a point when we are attempting to leave class so we can escape to some place we are treated well and respected. We build community amongst ourselves to find our voice and we hope to make our voice heard, by you and by people on our campuses.

This bill will help our campuses shed light on the LGBTQ community. We would be able to work towards a welcoming community and high enrollment and success rate for LGBTQ people. This



[635 NE Dekum St, Portland, OR, 97211](#) | [\(503\) 286-0477](#) | [www.orstudents.org](http://www.orstudents.org) | [@OregonStudents](#)  
will help members of the LGBTQ community feel less alone on their campus and allow colleges and universities to better assess the issues LGBTQ students face and provide them resources to meet these challenges.

This is a bill that I feel we could all be proud of and I hope that you will support us and pass this bill in its entirety. Thank you so much for being here today.

Heath Oltman  
Lane Community College