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

My name is Jared Roe. I am a first year student at Lane Community College majoring in speech and I'm here representing the Oregon Student Association. Today I am here to urge you to support SB 473.

Support is an important factor in one's education and can be the difference between failure and success. I have narcolepsy, a disorder that causes random daytime sleepiness. Without the outstanding support of my parents and my school's help to overcome this obstacle, I wouldn't even be awake to witness myself drop out.

This is why I feel very strongly about this bill. The support I am given as a narcoleptic is fantastic; however, as a gay man, the education system has not accommodated my needs, let alone the entire LGBTQ community at my school and this in this state. This is not the school's fault, the way our current education system is set up right now makes all LGBTQ students invisible..

An example of what would help me would be more supportive counseling services on campus for me and my peers to utilize. A community cannot make change if it is not recognized by the institution it is a part of. When we are invisible, the disparities in our educational achievement are not addressed and the challenges we face are not met with support.

This bill provides a very simple yet effective solution to this problem, collecting demographic data on LGBT students allows schools to better assess and meet the needs of LGBT students. If you are skeptical on whether this plan would be effective or even help at all, there are examples of how data collection has helped communities like ours. For example, the U.S. Department of Education's Civil Data Collection has helped start movements to change discipline policies by showing that students from racial minority groups were disciplined at higher rates than their peers. In this case, collection of data on a community led to better support and outcomes for students and the same is needed to ensure the success of LGBT students in Oregon.

The LGBTQ community is in no way a small collective of people, for example at my school the Gender and Sexuality Alliance (hereafter referred to as the GSA) often holds events pertaining to the problems faced by us in the LGBTQ community. This is the problem, however, the GSA is a student-run group. We need recognition from our schools and need to have data to show the challenges we face as a community. As Stephen T. Russell, a professor at the University of Arizona said of his research on data collection "The problem is that getting any traction to make policy and programmatic change does require that we know something to be true, not just that we believe it to be true. If we knew that a problem was happening, it would be a lot easier to stop." I ask you today to support and pass SB 473 in its entirety.



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Thank you,
Jared Roe
Lane Community College