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March 10, 2015

To: House Committee on Higher Education, Innovation, and Workforce Development  
From: Joaquin Ramos  
RE: House Bill 2516-4

Chair Read, Vice-Chairs Gallegos & Whisnant and Members of the Committee,

My name is Joaquin Ramos, I am a sophomore at University of Oregon, and I am here with the Oregon Student Association to urge your support of HB 2516 with the -4 amendments.

I am currently studying Ethnic Studies and French, and after I get my degree I want to go to law school. My goal is to become a district attorney, and to fight racial disparities in our justice system.

I have a great scholarship to go to UO that covers my tuition, but the cost of my textbooks is so high, that I can barely get through a term even with this financial aid. During fall term last year, I realized too late that I had spent so much on my textbooks that I didn't have any money left to buy food, and I had to go to the food bank for a week. I am really careful with my budget, but this still happens every term, and I have to choose between relying on support from my friends in order to eat, and not buying books for class.

This term, I couldn't buy my books. I have been trying to borrow the books I need from friends or go to the library to scan pages, but this takes a lot of time, and sometimes they don't have what I need. I can't take a test on a book that I don't have, and this is affecting my future.

This bill would fund a program that creates free, alternative textbook options for students, and it would help me and other students to get the books we need for class without going under financially. This is why I support HB 2516-4, and why I am asking you as a committee to pass it. Thank you for the opportunity to testify with you today.

Sincerely,

Joaquin Ramos

University of Oregon

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