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March 11th, 2015

To: House Committee on Higher Education, Innovation, and Workforce Development
From: Joshua D. Kaufman Mendenhall
RE: HB 2516-4 Textbook Affordability

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

My name is Josh Kaufman Mendenhall and I am a first year student at Oregon State University, and I am here with the Oregon Student Association to urge your support of HB 2516 -4.

When it comes to attending college, preparation is key. Aspiring students file FAFSAs, apply for grants and scholarships and, almost invariably, take out loans in preparation for what will be the single largest expense in many young people's lives. A key aspect of determining what schools would-be students can afford to attend, comes down to the cost of tuition and fees, but when budgeting their college expenses, many students are blindsided by the costs of textbooks. This makes it extremely difficult for students to accurately budget their college expenses, and leads many to have to make large, unplanned out-of pocket purchases, or pay for these vital materials with high-interest revolving credit.

As an economics and finance double major I can tell you firsthand that for many required courses, textbooks can total hundreds or even thousands of dollars each term. Access to these expensive textbooks often resorts in the difference between letter grades. I fear academically for myself and peers with these rising costs of required textbooks. This is why I support HB2516-4. Both of these bills would give students options when budgeting for college and would provide financial flexibility.

This is why I support HB2516-4 and encourage this committee to pass it.

Please remember my story when voting on this bill. Thank you for letting me speak with you today.

Sincerely,

Joshua D. Kaufman Mendenhall
Oregon State University