

HB 5024

Respected members of state government:

I have come before you today, to illustrate the need for increased funding or sweeping reform in how you fund higher education in Oregon. The current model is not sustainable. Why does PSU receive such a small portion of the overall funding pie when we have the largest student enrollment in the state? We are at a breaking point, where students must choose whether to purchase a book, or purchase groceries. Go to school, or quit, and get a job. Are these the choices you are proud that we're having to make? Why in Oregon, does it make more sense for our lawmakers to spend ever increasing amounts of money incarcerating Oregonians instead of educating them?? Costs on campus continue to rise, Despite many of them being for fixed buildings and services. Parking costs are now \$353 a term. Rent \$1033. Various fees tacked onto our student accounts now add up to \$423 per term, in addition to the constant raises (\$3105) of tuition. A payment plan was recently enacted to counter uncollected student debt, that inadvertently preyed on the poorest of currently attending students, not dropouts. The situation is grim.

I am a first-generation college student. I am Native American, from a low-income family background. I successfully pursued and obtained a Bachelors degree with a double minor here at PSU. But it has not been without struggle. I spent 2 and half of those years sweating in a mascot suit, the embodiment of PSU's school spirit as Victor Viking to earn a small athletic scholarship. I earned a competitive scholarship from my tribe, with a few other small scholarships to complete my funding. Now, I am a graduate student.

But the hard truth is this. Without the scholarships I'm receiving I could not afford to attend your school or get my degree. With scholarships and loans, I have only \$1200 per term, or \$300 a month to purchase books, food and other basic necessities. If you can make that work, I'd like to see you do it. It is time for our lawmakers to show us they care about Oregonians and their futures. Be innovative and show us that we have not made a poor choice in where we chose to invest our education dollars. Again I respectfully Thank you for your valuable time~

Monty Henson