

Dear Representative Esquivel:

I am the owner of Abdill Career College in Medford, Oregon. Abdill has been in continuous operation since 1980, and I have owned it since 2000. The school provides education for areas in a variety health care careers that leads to substantially more than minimum wage for members of our community. The school is nationally accredited, approved for Veteran's funding, Federal Student Financial Aid, and has received two separate School of Excellence awards. The school has enjoyed and maintained an excellent reputation in our community these many years for the quality of education and skills our graduates possess, and employers have often contacted the school seeking our graduates.

In addition, under the previous administration of the State of Oregon Private Career School Sector, I served as a member of that administrations advisory board for 7 years, my school was used as a model for and demonstration of standards and compliance for schools in Oregon, and is currently used as the model for the State of Oregon Board of Medical Imaging administration for our externship.

Last year, after voicing my concerns about some rule changes by the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) and their effect on Oregon's Private Career Schools my school was targeted, threatened, and irreparably damaged by Mr. Peter Gertenrich and Mr. Juan Baez-Arevalo of the HECC, in the following manner:

- Mr. Gertenrich informed me that he was performing an investigation of my school due to a complaint. I made numerous requests to know what the complaint was regarding. Mr. Gertenrich and Mr. Arevelo refused to provide me with any information about what I was accused of.
- Mr. Gertenrich and Mr. Arevelo refused to allow me the opportunity to defend myself against the unknown complaint and refused to allow me to provide documentation and/or testimony of others that could demonstrate my school's compliance against the unknown complaint.
- Public records request revealed that Mr. Gertenrich conducted a biased investigation and provided confidential school and school employee information to students and ex-employee's of the school without my knowledge or consent.
- Public records request revealed that Mr. Gertenrich instructed and encouraged alleged complainants to secretly gather information from within my school which encouraged them to violate school policies and cause disruption at the school.
- Under threat of revocation of the school's license Mr. Gertenrich forced my school to change externship and attendance policies in a manner that violates U.S. Department of Education (U.S. DOE) regulations even though he was fully informed that it would place the school out of compliance with that regulatory agency resulting in findings.

- Mr. Baez-Arevelo and Mr. Gertenrich's actions and communications created audit reviews from every regulatory agency the school maintains compliance with. After audit reviews from each of those agencies the school was found in compliance with all agencies except for findings regarding U.S. DOE which Mr. Gertenrich and Mr. Baez-Arevelo forced the school to change.
- Mr. Gertenrich and Mr. Arevelo instructed the school to take steps for instructor approval, and then later issued a fine to the school for following those same procedures.
- Mr. Gertenrich and Mr. Arevelo placed my school on probation and issued a fine even though they found no violation of rules and/or regulations.
- The school requested a hearing and was informed by Mr. Baez-Arevelo and Mr. Gertenrich that Oregon's Private Career Schools have no right to a hearing or an appeal, and all actions by the HECC are at the full discretion and decision of Mr. Gertenrich and Mr. Baez-Arevelo.
- Mr. Gertenrich and Mr. Baez-Arevelo provided information to news media stigmatizing my school and causing irreparable damage.
- Mr. Gertenrich and Mr. Baez-Arevelo denied my fundamental right of due process, and placed my school on probation which they knew would be a death warrant for my school.
- Oregon's degree granting private schools are provided the right and opportunity to a hearing and/or an appeal PRIOR TO action by the HECC, but Oregon's Private non-degree granting schools currently are not afforded that same right and are at the mercy of Mr. Baez-Arevelo and Mr. Gertenrich's personal actions.

While my school has suffered greatly at the hands of these individuals at the HECC and may not survive, it is my hope that this bill will provide protections, equal rights under the law, and due process to other schools in our great state of Oregon.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

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Owner/Director
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