



635 NE Dekum St, Portland, OR, 97211 | (503) 286-0477 | www.orstudents.org | @OregonStudents

Chairs Hass, Barnhart, and members of the committee,

My name is Nikki Aman, and you may have seen me sitting in the front row of this meeting before; I've been attending these meetings since they began this session. I am a junior at Oregon State Community and an intern for the Oregon Students Association. Sitting in this meeting, I've seen many great discussions about what to do about the tax code take place, and I'm truly honored to watch history in the making as you all deliberate on tax reform.

I'm here today outside of my usual stead to tell you that while the discussions have been lively and spirited, the focus of education has fallen to the wayside. I'm reminded of several bits of wisdom that have been sprinkled throughout my time in this meeting that I will share with you. In Representative Kotek, Nathanson, and Barnhart's proposal on the second day of this committee, in response to a question asked of her, Representative Kotek said "How long will our kids have to wait while the adults figure this out?" This stuck with me as a student, because while I wouldn't necessarily qualify myself as a kid, I definitely feel helpless watching funding for education continue to dwindle as the session closes. I appreciate Representative Hernandez's continual reminders of his own student debt, as it would seem that often times when discussing education, it is described as a spectrum with early childhood development on one end and high school on the other, when that simply isn't true or representative.

I've heard Dr. Warner mention on several occasions that an educated populace is happy, spending populace. There is concern, rightfully so, of how college graduates will have spending power if we have so much debt. Believe me, students also share that concern. By increasing support to higher education, you can help alleviate some of the financial pressure that keeps us students from being trapped in tens of thousands of dollars like your own fellow board member.

As I've said, it's been a unique opportunity to see deliberation happen, and I'm interested in seeing what happens next. It is worrisome that I may not get to continue doing student internships like this one for much longer, as it becomes increasingly unlikely that I will be able to afford to finish this degree. Please keep in mind that many institutions will be increasing their tuition by at least 10%. This will inevitably force some students to wave goodbye to their dreams. Many of you on both sides of the political spectrum have said "we have to do something." You couldn't be more correct, and there is an opportunity to do so now.

The Oregon Students Association registered and educated over 50,000 students this year and this includes students in your districts. We've been in the capital every day since the beginning of session, and you've met some of us already. Many, students like myself have been sitting in these meetings and have been hoping the legislature will take care of some our interests since we make up a large voting block. The point is, we're here, we've been paying attention, and will continue to do so. Your decisions will stick with us in more ways than just our pocketbooks.

Thank you for your time, and I look forward to seeing you make a good decision.