

TO: House Higher Education and Workforce Development Committee

FROM: Daryl Maplethorpe

SUBJECT: HB 4141

DATE: February 6th, 2018

Chair Reardon and Members of the Committee:

Good Afternoon, Chair Reardon, Vice-chairs Alonso-Leon and Whisnant and members of the committee. My name is Daryl Maplethorpe, and I am a first generation college student. In 2014 I started school at Southern Oregon University, a decision I made because it was the only college I could afford. Every year since I started school tuition has increased and my financial aid has decreased, making it harder to stay in school. My father is unable to offer me support in my education, my mom passed away in September and my dad is a manual laborer for the city of Portland. So my only support for school comes from working two jobs and a consistently decreasing financial aid package.

Being a first generation college student I have had a series of obstacles to traverse, a majority of which I had to navigate alone. Going into senior year of high school I was constantly reminded that I was not supposed to go to college. My family feared that if I didn't finish college, there wouldn't be a way to pay for the debt I accrued. In spite of this I persevered. I am now a senior in college, on track to get a B.S. in Psychology with honors, I'm student body president, and in a couple of weeks I will be interviewing for my top choice graduate school program.

Despite my successes in college, I'm still facing countless financial struggles. I've already had to pick up a second job to stay on top of my bills. I'm taking full-time credits, and my role as student body president is a full-time job in of itself. For me, money is time and it's time I don't have to spare. Tuition increases, like the ones students saw across the state last year, can be the end of the road for students. For me it meant picking up more hours at work and finding cheaper sources of food. Many students drop out in the face of financial struggles, leaving our students in debt and without the degree they came for. If universities are going to continue to attempt to raise tuition and price students out, we must make sure universities are held accountable to a process of student involvement and specific criteria that justifies the increase.

There is already a 5% accountable measure that requires the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) to review increases above that threshold. The current systems gives the HECC little to no guidance to base their decisions on. It is for that reason that I urge the representatives in this state to pass the Student Voice & Transparency Act. This act would not only require every university to include students in the tuition advising process, but it would also give the HECC guidance on how to make decisions regarding tuition. The guidance outlined in the Act is very similar to the criteria Governor Brown released last year. Institutions proved they had the ability to follow this criteria last year, we are simply asking that it become statute so we have the backing to hold universities accountable when they seek astronomically high tuition increases.

You all have the power to give students a space in the tuition setting process. I urge you to support students by supporting the Student Voice & Transparency Act.