

**TO:** House Higher Education and Workforce Development Committee

**FROM:** Shasta Luker

**SUBJECT:** HB 4141

**DATE:** February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2018

Chair Reardon and Members of the Committee:

I am Shasta Luker and I attend Eastern Oregon University currently as a Junior. The reason why I decided to attend EOU is because I wanted a better life for my child and I. I moved to La Grande in 2014 when I found out I was pregnant with my daughter. I was left alone pregnant and had no job, no money, no house etc. I decided that EOU was the best choice because I don't want to end up working 4-part time jobs and never get to see my daughter.

Because I am a single mom, I decided that the only way that would work for my daughter and I is to live off student loans while going to school. I currently live in low income housing and if I had a job while going to school, I would lose my housing. The sad thing about how our state is set up, is that there isn't much support for single parents when they decide to get higher education. For that reason, taking out school loans is the only way I could attend school. I do receive the Pell grant, but the rest is all loans.

Right now, my debt is \$30,278.80 and I have at least a year left to finish my degree. I have applied for scholarships in which I hope will help me next year.

I am not sure if tuition increased last year, but I do know they are talking about increasing our tuition for this coming year. The amount is either 2 or 5% increase in tuition, along with a 5% increase of out of state and housing.

No, I am not aware of any tuition setting process.

No, I was not consulted to give input, except to give this testimony.

I understand that school costs money now, what I wish our state would do is give more help for students, especially students like myself who are trying to make a better life for her family. I don't want to live off welfare just to survive. I want to become someone who pays taxes for our state and country and can also help others succeed in this world. To become that person, I need a higher education, which is expensive. Please take in consideration that not all the students who go to school are the same. Some of us have no support and are trying to succeed on our own and could really benefit help however it looks. Please support HB 4141.

Thank you for your time

Shasta Luker- 2/6/2018