



THE OREGON STUDENT ASSOCIATION

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TO: House Higher Education and Workforce Development Committee

FROM: Tabitha Pitzer

SUBJECT: HB 4141

DATE: February 6th, 2018

Chair Reardon and Members of the Committee:

My name is Tabitha Pitzer. I am a fourth-year student at Oregon State University, and I am here with the Oregon Student Association to urge your support of House Bill 4141.

My college journey started at OSU in 2014 and through my years in college this has become my new home. Every year I have attended Oregon State, tuition has gone up. As an immigrant whose family moved for the sole purpose of me and my siblings having the opportunity to earn degrees, I am fairly stubborn and believe deeply that I must finish my education before joining the workforce. For me, tuition increases do not mean that I will drop out of school, they simply mean that I will have to take out more loans and make sacrifices to reach my American Dream. I currently have \$30,000 in student loan debt, as well as my parents having \$30,000 in student loan debt that they expect me to pay back. In order to make ends meet, I live without wifi in my household meaning anytime I need to access the internet for assignments or research I must travel 15 minutes to campus to use the wifi in the library. I also currently have a part time job and a paid internship on top of holding 12 leadership positions, being a full-time student, and doing my own research. Tuition increases make my life increasingly difficult, and while my life is challenging, I know that many students have it worse—especially those at schools who saw close to double digit tuition increases last year.

Oregon State University was the only public university in Oregon that did not approve a tuition increase above 5%, likely due to our unique tuition setting process. Our tuition setting process starts with the Vice President of finance meeting with our Student Budget Advisory Council. This board is made up of 12 students who work together to brainstorm how we can minimize tuition increases and make strategic budget cuts. They send their recommendations to the University Budget Council, which is made up of multiple administrators, faculty and staff, and four students, who create a budget recommendation to send to the University President and Board of Trustees. Our budget setting process works well because it includes a large number of decision makers—and especially students—to come up with creative ways to address increasing costs.

While OSU had a wonderful tuition setting process, not all campuses have this level of community involvement and should amend their processes to fit a more inclusive model—like the tuition advisory council established in HB 4141. When we increase the number of people brought to the table, especially those who will be paying for the tuition increases the most, we see innovative ways to address costs and a more transparent, responsible, and equitable tuition setting processes.

This is why I support HB 4141, and encourage this committee to pass it. Please remember my story when voting on this bill. Thank you for letting me speak with you today.

Sincerely,

Tabitha Pitzer

Oregon State University

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