



February 7th, 2018

TO: Senate Education Committee
FROM: Ricardo Lujan-Valerio, OSA Legislative Director
SUBJECT: SB 1563 – Tuition Equity 3.0

Chair Roblan and Members of the Committee:

SB 1563 proposes technical fixes to our current statute that give our Oregonian Dreamers and DACAmented students the opportunity to pursue higher education. This bill will do the following:

1. Oregonian students must fulfill certain requirements to benefit from tuition equity. One of those requirements is to provide an affidavit that indicates the intent to obtain a social security number (SSN) or an individual tax identification number (I-TIN). This new bill would eliminate this unnecessary requirement; and
2. Allow public higher education institutions to offer scholarships to Dreamers and DACAmented Oregonian students and financial aid to those benefiting from tuition equity.

The state of Oregon has taken great actions to assist our undocumented Oregonian students by recognizing the great contributions they bring to the state. Our legislators have rightfully allowed the opportunity for folks to pursue their higher education opportunities. In 2013, we made it possible for young Oregonians without documentation who have grown up in this state to attend a community college or public university while paying resident-rate tuition. Our state leaders later expanded the opportunity to higher education for our community in 2015 by allowing students who qualified for Tuition Equity (2013) to apply for in-state financial aid.

Apart from being an Oregonian, I consider myself a Dreamer. I had the great privilege of testifying in front of this assembly in previous years in order to advocate for my academic future and the future of those who find themselves in similar situations. As someone that does not qualify for federal financial aid or student loans, I found it very difficult to afford tuition. I had to work full-time while going to school full-time. And although I am an outstanding student, I could not help but to worry about my financial stability while in the classroom; constantly worrying whether I could afford next term's tuition.

We now find ourselves in a place where the majority of Americans believe that folks in my situation deserve an opportunity of recognition, both by our society and government. I was proud to say that my great state of Oregon was ahead of the game in 2013 and 2015. I now advocate to

Ricardo Lujan Valerio | Legislative Director
TEL: 503.286.0447 | | FAX: 503.286.0924
635 NE Dekum St., Portland, OR 97211
ricardo@orstudents.org

you so that we may continue to be one of the main leaders in the nation in giving Oregonians the opportunity of an education and continue the great work we have accomplished.

This is why I support SB 1563, and encourage this committee to pass it and further support it on the Senate floor.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I'm available should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Ricardo Lujan-Valerio
Legislative Director, OSA
ricardo@orstudents.org