



February 12th, 2018

TO: Senate Education Committee
FROM: Ricardo Lujan-Valerio, OSA Legislative Director
SUBJECT: SB 1554 – 1

Chair Roblan and Members of the Committee:

My name is Ricardo Lujan-Valerio and I am the Legislative Director for the Oregon Student Association. I'm writing this testimony in support of Senate Bill 1554 – 1, which would allow low-income families the opportunity to invest in their children's future.

It comes as no surprise to members of this committee that higher education tuition rates continue to rise. Last summer, we witnessed some of the highest tuition increases this state has experienced, some as high as 12 percent. With increasing costs in education and external financial obligations, Oregonians often find themselves heavily depending on the investment their parents made on them years ago, if any.

SB 1554 – 1 is a step closer towards the right direction. It sends a message to Oregonians that the state is looking out for the well-being and education of their families. If a family currently needs assistance from the state in the form of food stamps or other means, they are required to deplete their available assets before partially or fully qualifying for a program. Some of these assets come in the form of college savings accounts. It's unacceptable to deprive Oregonians the ability to apply and receive assistance through troubling times and put the future of their families on the line.

Senate Bill 1554 – 1 would allow families to save up money without worrying if it would affect the benefits they're currently receiving from the state. It would allow young adults pursuing for higher education to achieve their academic goals, despite coming from a low-income background. It would eliminate a barrier to education. It would give hope to thousands currently facing housing and economic crisis.

I urge your support for SB 1554 – 1 and respectfully request that you vote in favor of the bill in this committee and on the Senate floor. Thank you for your time and consideration. I am available for any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

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

Ricardo Lujan Valerio | Legislative Director
TEL: 503.286.0447 | CELL: 760.810.2121 | FAX: 503.286.0924
635 NE Dekum St., Portland, OR 97211
ricardo@orstudents.org