



**Testimony of Kimberly McCullough, Policy Director
In Support of SB 1563 – Tuition Equity
House Committee On Higher Education and Workforce Development
02/22/2018**

Chair Reardon and Members of the Committee:

The American Civil Liberties Union of Oregon¹ supports SB 1563, which will improve upon Oregon’s tuition equity laws. More specifically, SB 1563 will remove the unnecessary requirement that Oregon Dreamers apply for a social security number (SSN) or an individual tax identification number (I-TIN) in order to qualify for tuition equity. This bill will also allow Oregon colleges and universities to offer scholarships and financial aid to Oregon Dreamers who qualify for tuition equity.

The ACLU of Oregon has a proud history of advocating for the fair treatment of all persons here in Oregon, and we understand that tuition equity is an important way to ensure that Oregon’s laws treat all students fairly. That is why we supported passage of tuition equity in 2013, which expanded access to higher education by allowing Oregon’s high school graduates to pay in-state tuition at Oregon colleges and universities, regardless of where they were born or their immigration status². In 2015, we were grateful this legislature expanded on the great work done in 2013 by allowing students who qualify for tuition equity to apply for in-state financial aid. **We now see SB 1563 as a valuable opportunity to continue to improve our tuition equity laws.**

All Oregonians deserve fair access to the high quality and affordable educational opportunities provided by the Oregon’s colleges and universities. Students who benefit from tuition equity are students grew up in Oregon, graduated from Oregon high schools, and they are otherwise eligible for admission to an Oregon college or university on equal terms with their friends and classmates.

¹ The American Civil Liberties Union of Oregon (ACLU of Oregon) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization with more than 42,000 members in the State of Oregon.

² Note that graduates of Oregon high schools must have attended at least three years of school in Oregon or five years in the United States, a U.S. territory or Puerto Rico immediately prior to graduation in order to qualify for tuition equity.

Tuition equity ensures these students can access the educational opportunities that they have already earned. **These students—who are our neighbors, our friends, and often our family members—are an integral part of the Oregon community.** Because there is an indisputably strong correlation between increased educational opportunities for young people and improved life chances in later years, tuition equity also enriches our state and contribute to its vibrancy.

For these reasons, the **ACLU of Oregon urges you to Support SB 1563.** Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions, comments, or concerns.