



THE OREGON STUDENT ASSOCIATION

635 NE Dekum St, Portland, OR, 97211

Phone: (503) 286-0477

www.orstudents.org

TO: House Higher Education and Workforce Development Committee
FROM: Paola Lopez
SUBJECT: SB 1563 – Tuition Equity
DATE: February 22nd, 2018

Chair Reardon and Members of the Committee:

My name is Paola Lopez. I am a freshman at the University of Oregon pursuing a Business major and Spanish minor. I am also a DACA recipient and currently benefit directly from Tuition Equity. If this help was not granted, I would have most likely taken a year off and worked or attended a community college. To get to this point in my education means a lot to me and my family. I was always taught that education is the key to success. I couldn't see myself not pursuing an educational path since my parents sacrificed life as they knew for a better future for me.

When I was applying for college and scholarships, I realized I was different. Everyone talked about financial aid and Pathways- a scholarship that covers full tuition and fees. I assumed that my social security and work permit provided by DACA would allow me to receive some financial help, but I was soon proved wrong. I do not qualify for any of the scholarships the University offers. When I found out about Tuition Equity, and not having to pay out-of-state fees I was relieved that the costs would less, but I still struggle. I balance a part-time job and 17 credits each term, and still have a hard time paying for books, fees, and tuition costs.

I have lived in Oregon since sixth grade, grown up with the same kids I graduated with and I recently found the injustices within our education system. I graduated with a 3.9 GPA, have over 1000 volunteer hours, and completed various AP and high honors classes. I do not say this to brag, but to show that a student with half of my achievements is fully funded for their college career. And you may ask, why is that? I will say because they were born in this country and I was not. I believe in the right to receive an education and that money should not be a barrier. I ask you here today to support Tuition Equity 3.0 so that hard students like myself can pursue the future we have always dreamed of having.