

To: Joint Committee on Student Success
From: Haley Chaides
Date: April 11, 2019

Co-Chairs Smith Warner, Roblan and members of the committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to speak with you today. My name is Haley Chaides, and I am a freshman at Woodburn High School. I am here to speak in support of the Student Success Act. I am excited about the work this committee is doing to make sure that corporations finally pay their fair share, so that we can invest in schools like mine and make sure that all students have what they need to succeed.

Because I have moved around a lot, I got to experience what it was like to be a student in three different school districts. I saw how some schools offered programs like woodshop, and orchestra while other lower-income schools didn't offer those kinds of activities. That doesn't seem very fair to me, still, in elementary and middle school, I experienced how large class sizes and less individual attention made my anxiety worse. I know that smaller classes would have made me feel less anxious and more attentive to what was being taught to me.

I identify in the LGBTQ community, and I noticed in middle school that what was being taught in health class didn't reflect what my feelings were going through. Health class was super basic and focused on basic "this is what your body goes through during puberty" and what happens during pregnancy. It didn't feel as inclusive as I wanted it to be. The curriculum ignored LGBTQ identity and experience, and that takes a toll, on me and the other queer peers. I ended up tuning out during class. Luckily, I have a mom who is super open and who I can talk to, but it made me think about all my friends who don't have that support at home, or in their schools.

That is why this year I joined the Planned Parenthood Woodburn Teen Council, where I trained to become a peer educator who can lead classroom presentations on things like birth control, abstinence, STIs, and healthy relationships. I was trained on how to share resources that are medically accurate *and* inclusive. I genuinely believe that sex education, that includes information about sexual orientation, consent, STIs, and all the ways to protect yourself, will not only make people safer, it will help people talk through their problems and ask questions and ask for help rather than bottle things up. In our relationships lesson, it is more inclusive than anything I have ever experienced, with LGBT feelings being involved in one of the examples we use. I am proud to be able to create a safe space and be a resource for health information to my friends and peers.

When people have knowledge and education, they can keep themselves safe. Keeping people safe is my first priority. Having them feel comfortable and safe is my second. Through my work on the Teen Council I feel more involved in school, and I like giving back to schools and students. I recently learned that the Oregon Health Authority asked 197 school districts in Oregon if they had a plan for teaching sex ed to their students and only 35 said they did. The top reason school districts listed for why it was hard to teach sex ed was a lack of funding.

Where you live or what school you go to shouldn't impact whether or not you have access to health care and information. With the proposed \$2 billion in new student investments, I hope that we can invest in more resources for sex education, mental health, and to address sexual assault. I want our health and sex ed classes to include sexual orientation and mental health because LGBTQ students are more vulnerable to bullying, depression, and anxiety. I also want every student to be able to access mental health resources like counselors. And from myself who suffers from PTSD, MDD, and anxiety, I would hope to have more kids be educated on the matter.

Please support me and my fellow students by voting YES on the Student Success Act.