

Oregon Student Association



June 3rd 2019

To: House Committee on Rules

From: Perla Alvarez

RE: SB 854

Good morning Chair Holvey, Vice Chairs- Williamson and Wilson

My name is Perla Alvarez and I am the Legislative Director for the Oregon Student Association. The Oregon Student Association represents over 130,000 students statewide and work towards an affordable and accessible higher education for all Oregonians. SB 854 is one of their priorities for this session because students believe that Oregonians should have access to practice a career of their choice regardless of documentation status.

During OSA issue choosing campaign, OSA collected 17,000 surveys. Expanding resource to undocumented students ranked number 6th in our results. This is something Oregon students care about. This is why OSA is working closely with Senator Dembrow and Representative Hernandez to make this a reality.

SB 854 would mandate that licensing boards accept Individual Tax Identification Numbers, which allows people who do not have access to a Social Security Number, to pursue careers such as law, teaching, and cosmetology. The bill does not change any other requirements or procedures currently in place to obtain a license, and people applying for a professional license would still have to comply with other requirements from that board to be able to be licensed.

This bill will allow undocumented communities to pursue careers without being discriminated against. By creating access to professional licenses, Oregon creates economic opportunity for our highly skilled immigrant communities and boosts the state's economy. As Oregon becomes more diverse, there are high demands for professionals who are multilingual, multicultural and highly skilled and SB 854 will create that opportunity.

I would also like to stress that people with ITINs are contributing to the economy every day and they are not getting much in return. They are filing taxes and they are paying them and often times these communities do not qualify from services from the taxes they pay. I would also like to remind you that there are thousands of young people in Oregon who migrated with their parents, the DREAMers, who are highly skilled, qualified and have gone through the appropriate programs and education and are more than ready to be able to obtain a professional license but cannot due to documentation status. SB 854 would allow these communities to use their skill set to contribute to the economy.

California is a state on west coast that creates access by accepting tax identification numbers in place of a social security number. Oregon should join California in this effort.

Thank you for your support to Oregon students and aspiring professionals. The Oregon Student Association urges your support for SB 854. Thank you for your time.

OREGON STUDENT ASSOCIATION

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