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Steve Lanier Nguyen  
17239 NW Ivybridge St.  
Portland, OR 97229  
nguyenstevent@gmail.com

Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Oregon Senate Education Committee Members,

As a veteran of the United States Army and graduate of a “predatory, for profit” college, I am writing to you with my concerns regarding Senate Bill 1544 for the 2020 Oregon Legislative Regular Session.

After years of attending traditional community college classes and spending tens of thousands of dollars, I was a young man who still had no idea of what I wanted to do with my life. Shortly after turning twenty-three I joined the Oregon Army National Guard. Soon after my initial training, I was deployed to Iraq. During my training and deployment, I found that I was really passionate about health care, especially emergency medicine. I also figured out that I do not learn well within the confines of the traditional American education model, and needed something different, a school where hands on training was the key focus. I responded well to the Army model of training which is see one, do one, teach one. After returning from my deployment I was full of excitement and couldn't wait to find my new career. After researching and talking to medical professionals, family, and friends, I decided to become a respiratory therapist.

In the Portland metro area there are only two schools that offer this allied health program. Concorde Career College and Mt. Hood Community College (MHCC). At that time, due to the stigma of for-profit colleges, my initial instinct was to seek out MHCC. After doing research I was very surprised to learn that MHCC only started one cohort a year and had a waiting list of over forty applicants. After careful consideration I decided to look into Concorde Career College, and ended up enrolling in the program using my GI Bill to pay for it. I am now a proud graduate of the respiratory therapy program at Concorde Career College, Portland campus.

My decision to attend Concorde was one of the best decisions I've made in my life. Today, almost seven years after graduating, I am a Transport Neonatal and Pediatric Respiratory Care Practitioner on the KIDS Team at Randall Children's Hospital. This means that I am one of the few respiratory therapists in the state of Oregon whose job it is to transport and care for critical ill children (premature newborns to teenagers) from hospitals all over Washington, Oregon, California and Idaho who require a greater level of care back to either Doernbecher Children's Hospital at OHSU or Randall Children's Hospital at Legacy Emmanuel. My career was only made possible through my ability to enter into the Concorde Respiratory Therapy Program. I believe in the program so much that when the opportunity to teach at Concorde came up, I jumped at the chance.

As well as working on the KIDS Team, I am also a part-time Concorde instructor specializing in pediatric and neonatal medicine. I use my training and experience from over six years of critical care medicine to prepare students, who have also included fellow veterans, for an exciting and rewarding career as a

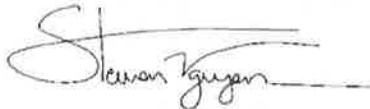
respiratory therapist. I have had the privilege to mentor other veterans as they transition successfully into the workforce through this program. Through their experiences and my own, I know how hard that transition can be. Many of them, including myself, did not have the necessary academic background to compete for the limited spots available at MHCC. Without the opportunity to attend Concorde and become respiratory therapists, we would not have had the ability to help care for the thousands of Oregonians we will treat over the course of our careers.

While I applaud the intent of the Senate Bill to protect veterans, I disagree with how the Bill would be implemented. I would argue that it might even hurt veterans with alternative learning styles like myself. I implore you to consider that not all "predatory, for profit" colleges are evil. I would not be the person I am today without my education from great teachers at Concorde Career College.

In summary, I urge you not to pass Senate Bill 1544 the way it is currently written. To assume that all for-profit colleges are corrupt and immoral is a huge mistake and will negatively impact future veterans who seek an allied health career.

Thank you for your consideration, and please feel free to contact me if you wish to further discuss this issue.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Lanier Nguyen". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Steve Lanier Nguyen, RRT-NPS