

Dear Members of the Oregon House Education Committee:

Kaselelie! My name is Pamela Fredrick and I am from the COFA nation of the Federated States of Micronesia. I am a senior, attending Eastern Oregon University in pursuit of my Bachelors degree in Computer Science and Communications Studies with a minor in Anthropology and Sociology. I grew up in a family of eleven who believe that higher education is key to attaining a better life. My father is a retired high school teacher and my mother is unemployed. I have two older sisters with bachelor degrees and I am graduating with my bachelor's degree this June 2020 from Eastern Oregon University.

I am writing this testimony in support for the House Bill 4099 relating to instate tuition for COFA students in Oregon pursuing a higher education. I was recruited to attend Eastern Oregon University in the Fall of 2015 and arrived during the Summer of 2016 with nothing other than my clothes and the motivation to start learning. It had never reached my attention until the end of Spring 2017 where I received a letter from the university saying that I owe \$5,000 to the university. During that time, I did not have that amount of money or a job to pay my bill so I tried applying for more than two jobs to help cover portion of the cost. In the summer of 2017, I received another letter from the university saying that if I don't pay the full amount, then they would send my bill to collections. As a new student with no knowledge about the collections agency, this information got me really scared. I did not have a stable job that could help cover my debt in time for next school year. Not wanting to drop out after my first year of school, the only option that is left for me is to join the Oregon Army National Guard to help cover my debt without the intention or motivation to get enlisted into the military. But I had to, for the sake of my education. I am currently an active service member of the Oregon Army National Guard, Hotel Company (FSC) 145 BSB, soon will be deploying to Germany this spring 2020. Going into my third year of service has strengthened the love I have for serving this country. I serve this country because I love this country. I serve because of my family, my country, my loved ones, and for the future of Micronesia.

As of today, I have been involved in so many organizations on the Eastern Oregon University campus as a student leader helping to get students to have their voices, opinions and perspectives heard. I have been involved in taking students to the Oregon State capitol and lobby for funding for higher education especially EOU. I have been involved in putting on the only Diversity conference in Eastern Oregon University campus to promote equity, diversity, and inclusivity in the rural places like Union County. I am a full-time student currently having 4 student worker jobs that most of the time had to work as volunteer hours. I am asking that you support this bill which will grant COFA students to be able to pay in-state tuition at Oregon Community Colleges and Universities so that others like me do not have to work this hard to attain a college degree. By passing this bill, you are giving all current and future COFA students the chance of getting a higher education degree and lessening the financial burden and barriers that prevents them from graduating college. By passing this bill, you are giving us the chance to grow and become successful students on our campuses as well as reflective and responsible citizens in the community. I thank you for your time and hope that you consider supporting this bill.