

Hello to the Education Committee,

My name is Kathleen Rodriguez Perez and I am a student at the University of Oregon studying Ethnic Studies and English. I am also a policy coordinator at the Oregon Student Association.

I am here to ask you to join students in supporting HB 2590, the Student Voice Bill.

This bill would ensure that Oregon universities and colleges would work in helping ALL students graduate and obtain good paying jobs. Currently, campuses are not fully equipped to help everyone succeed. In my experience, the lack of knowledge regarding the services and support foster youth like myself need in order to thrive at college campuses has been really detrimental to my success on campus. I believe by educating staff members such as advisors and professors on financial, community and housing support for foster youth, it would help foster youth feel more readily supported by higher institutions. Another issue I have experienced is the lack of accountability sexual assault abusers and perpetrators face on college campuses. Survivors should not have to witness their abusers as they walk across campus. They should not have to be in the same classes and spaces as their abusers. College campuses continue to uphold the needs and wants of the abusers further perpetuating violence against the survivor. I believe by creating and maintaining a safe, affirming, survivor centered space within college campuses it will allow survivors to feel that their voices are being heard. College campuses must acknowledge that sexual and domestic violence is a prevalent issue among the campus community. They need to create a system where the survivor's safety, voice and experience will be prioritized and taken seriously.

There are many students that have a wide variety of needs that need to be met. This bill can help provide more support for students by creating a special committee to tour our campuses and look at what is working, and what is not working. This process would create an opportunity for students like me to have our voices and concerns heard which is why it is so important that you vote yes on HB 2590.

Not only does the future of the students depend on acquiring equitable and reliable resources, but so does the economy. The Oregon Employment Department projects that between 2019-2029, occupations that require higher levels of education for entry will grow fastest.

Please remember my story when you vote on this bill, and please join me in supporting HB 2590.

Thank you for your time,

Kathleen Rodriguez Perez