



February 5th, 2021

Chair Dembrow, Members of the Senate Education Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill 713 **“Ban the Box on Higher Education admissions” – which would prohibit public or private post-secondary institutions of education from requiring prospective students to disclose whether a prospective student has criminal conviction before the institution makes final determination on whether to admit the student.** My name is Alberto Gallegos and I am a political organizer with the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), Oregon State Council.

SEIU represents about 4,500 workers on seven University campuses – many of which are low-wage employees. Our classified members on University campuses are integral to the day-to-day operations and success of those universities. They maintain grounds and campus spaces, support libraries, and work in other fields, such as: IT, health services, nutrition, and non-teaching/non-management positions on campus. At the same time, we see Higher Education issues from a second vantage point. A substantial amount of our members are low-wage earners and they view post-secondary training and education as a critical component towards breaking away from the cycle of poverty that has plagued their families, neighbors, clients, and loved ones.

We, at SEIU, stand with all students who may face barriers based on many socio-economic concerns. There are more than enough barriers in place preventing working families from succeeding; past criminal history should not be another one. Prospective students with past convictions deserve a chance to explain their situation rather than be automatically removed from consideration for admission.

We will hold up the success of Oregon’s “ban the check box” effort for employment screening from five years ago. We were proud to stand with that effort as the Oregon Legislature passed it and it became law in January 2016. And we are just as proud to stand for this effort now. I attach a short statement from the Fair Shot Coalition that is as applicable for Oregon Higher Ed admissions today as it was five years ago.

“Banning the box will allow someone like me to get an interview so that I can show who I am today, not who I was. Potential employers can assess my qualifications for the job and I’m not immediately removed from the applicant pool because of my past mistakes.”

— Thi Vu

Please stand in unity with our members and all future students by supporting Senate Bill 713. I want to thank the committee and the sponsors of SB713 for giving this legislation due consideration in service to your constituencies.

Thank you,

Alberto Gallegos
Political and Government Relations Organizer
SEIU, Oregon State Council

SERVICE EMPLOYEES
INTERNATIONAL UNION
LOCAL 503

PO Box 12159

Salem, OR 97309-1259

1730 Commercial St. SE

Salem, OR 97302

6401 SE Foster Rd.

Portland, OR 97206

1.800.452.2146

www.seiu503.org