

Good afternoon, Chair Alonso Leon, Vice Chairs Neron and Weber, and Members of the House Education Committee,

My name is Hannah Figueroa Velazquez and I am a junior at Tualatin Highschool. I am also a member of the Tigard-Tualatin Student Union and the National Honors Society.

I am Latina and my parents immigrated here from Mexico in search of a better life. My mom is yet to get her citizenship and from their collective experiences as immigrants I have been raised in a household with no tolerance for hate and with the belief that a human cannot be illegal. I write this letter in the utmost support of House Bill 3363 as a Hispanic woman and a daughter of immigrants. In the recent political turmoil that we've experienced this past year, now more than ever is it necessary to stop being a bystander and take a stance. However, we cannot begin to make change on the state or school level without first appointing representatives that understand first-hand the prejudice we are all fighting to dismantle, but that only some of us face.

I see the lack of representation present within the leaders of my school district on the student, teacher and board level. Despite the rise in representation that I've seen from BIPOC, women, and the LGBTQ+ community as a whole, there remains a great absence of intersectionality. This became clear to me as I recently worked with fellow Student Union members to interview candidates of the upcoming school board election for my district so that we could choose which candidates we wanted to endorse. I was impressed with both the amount of women and people of color choosing to run given that for as long as I've been alive, there hasn't been a person of color as a school board member. This being said, I was disappointed to see that there were no applicants who qualified as both. I found myself struggling to evaluate the different candidates as white women and men of color both miss a fundamental aspect of who I am as a woman of color. This bill would provide a safe place for student voice and increase intersectionality on the state level. I urge you to consider how deeply patriarchal and racial issues intertwine with one another, something that can begin to change with a student council focused on addressing these disparities and one that's welcome to people of all backgrounds.

Thank you.