

Dear Chair Dembrow and Members of the Committee,

My name is Ariel Knox, I am writing today in support of SB 564. I dreamed of being a journalist and my very first job, at 16 was as a columnist for a local paper. Shortly after high school, I had a child. As a young mother I was effectively locked out of obtaining a higher education due to lack of resources. My husband couldn't watch our daughter as he worked to support us.

The overwhelming response I got from my community and local community college was that it would be neglectful of me, I'd be a bad mom if I tried to go to school with a young child. I was told it was my job to raise them, then, if I still wanted to, after they'd grown up, I could still 'pursue my dreams'.

A lot has changed since the early 90's when this was my experience, but not nearly enough. My children are grown now and I watch as they struggle to work and essentially home school their children due to COVID. What resources exist are often hard for students to find, and unknown to the very people who should be directed students to them.

As a parent one of my primary goals was to make the world a better place for my children and all future generations. To that end, I balanced cautioning them with waiting to start a family without blaming them for my career path. Now I see that it has nothing to do with age of the parent or student, but access to the resources to help them be successful.

It is my hope that this bill is just the beginning of a tectonic shift in higher education, one that levels the playing field and creates more accessibility to schooling to all who want it.

Thank you to Senator Gelser for championing this bill and to Chair Dembrow for sponsoring it.
Thank you to the committee for this opportunity to submit my testimony in support of SB 564,

Ariel Knox