

Dear Chair Dembrow and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kael Green, I am 19-years old, and a resident of Portland. I was born in Oregon and grew up between Oregon and Boston while my mom was finishing college and graduate school as a student parent. I am currently at student at PCC in the Gateway to College/Yes to College Program. I am writing today in support of SB 564.

Currently, Oregon lacks comprehensive data to indicate the number of college students that are also parents. This lack of data creates a significant barrier to making appropriate determinations about the specific educational needs and outcomes of student parents.

Identifying this key demographic information will allow institutions to best determine the proper allocation of resources that seek to increase access to higher education for student parents and support them in the completion of their degrees.

This matters to me because all four of my grandparents, my mom, my aunts, uncles, and my sister have all been student parents in Oregon. I also have friends at PCC who are student parents, and I've seen how hard it is for them. This past year, I also experienced this first-hand while my sister was living with me and I was helping her co-parent. Even with classes online, it was difficult to study with a baby who wanted to play with me and who I was helping to take care of. Even though I wasn't carrying the financial aspect of co-parenting, even helping with the caregiving piece of being a parent while keeping up with classes is incredibly difficult.

All students deserve to have the programs they need in order to succeed academically and Senate Bill 564 is the first step towards making this possible.

I believe that requiring public post-secondary institutions to identify whether a student is a parent, acting as a parent, or a guardian is an essential and desperately needed tool in the fight to lower the educational barriers for parenting students and close the achievement gap.

This is why I urge you to support SB 564.

Let student parents be counted.

Let us be seen.

Let our stories resonate through this hearing room, because they deserve to be heard.

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,

Kaelynn Green
Portland, Oregon