

Chair Wagner, Vice-Chair Girod, and members of the Senate Rules Committee,

For the record my name is Makana Waikiki and I am asking you to pass SB 854, and the -2 amendments along with it.

As an outgoing student government official at Western Oregon University, I can tell you that the small but highly meaningful policy changes within this legislation would make a world of difference for students like me and we really can't wait another year to pass them. This year, WOU has gotten a lot of attention for disagreements between students and administration, and disagreements between faculty and staff and administration. I have been in the unfortunate position of trying to access Trustees on my BOT and feeling gate kept by administrators multiple times, on issues ranging from proper policy regarding student fees to creating a safe space on campus for BIPOC students like myself. Right now at WOU, students have no guaranteed right to address our trustees either one on one or in meetings. I had to fight tooth and nail to bring the concerns of BIPOC students to trustees, and because our board secretary works for administration, often was subjected to much gatekeeping. SB 854 matters to me because it ensures that students, faculty, and staff have access to our campus's chief decision making body.

When I first saw the text of this bill, I was ecstatic. All of the problems students have been encountering this year are very well addressed. I can tell you firmly that SB 854 is a very good policy, and is very urgent.

Not only will this bill give much needed voice to students, faculty, and staff on campus, but I firmly believe it will foster healthier decision making on our Boards of Trustees. I truly believe our trustees care about us and want to hear from us, but right now things are set up so that there is no way for us to access them, which frankly is wrong and doesn't make sense.

Thank you to Senator Frederick, Representatives Evans and McLain, and Senator Gelser for sponsoring this bill. Please do vote yes on SB 854 and the -2 amendments, and I hope we can continue to work together to ensure our higher education institutions are places where students can thrive.

Thank you,

Makana Waikiki