

March 21, 2023

Dear Chair Rep John Lively and the members of the House Committee On Higher Education

My name is Tamam Waritu and I am a TRiO Alumni. I am writing to strongly advocate for the Oregon TRiO Association and request the approval of HB 3120-2. As a former beneficiary of the Oregon TRiO program and now a national student trainer, I have experienced firsthand the tremendous positive impact that the Oregon TRiO Association has had on students throughout the state.

As a first-generation student growing up in low-income government housing on food stamps, I lacked the support and guidance needed to pursue my academic dreams. That's where the TRiO program came in. This program provided me with the resources, mentorship, and exposure to opportunities that allowed me to not only attend college but to thrive and achieve academic success. Today, I hold a Master's degree from Harvard and a Bachelor's degree from Portland State University, and I am a public speaker and leadership trainer, where I have impacted the lives of over hundred-thousand students across 35 states, particularly those who, like me, were first-generation and low-income students.

Furthermore, the Oregon TRiO Association serves as a cohesive community that fosters personal development and growth. Through the Association's student leadership conference, I had the opportunity to connect with like-minded peers, learn from inspiring guest speakers, and cultivate leadership skills that have been indispensable in my academic and professional pursuits.

Presently, as a student trainer partnering with the Oregon TRiO Association, I have had the privilege of witnessing the Association's impact on students across diverse backgrounds. Through my collaboration with the Association, I have traveled extensively throughout Oregon State, working with students to develop the skills they need to excel academically and beyond. The impact of the Oregon TRiO Association on underrepresented students is remarkable and I strongly believe that it is imperative to continue supporting this organization so that low-income first-generation students across the state can continue to benefit from its services.

I implore the Committee to approve HB HB3120-2, as this organization serves as an invaluable asset to the academic success and personal development of countless underserved students in Oregon.

Sincerely,

Tamam Waritu

National Speaker/Trainer  
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