

## Testimony on SB 272- April 18 , before the House Higher Education Education Committee

Chair Lively, Vice chairs, McIntire, Ruiz and committee members,

My name is Loyd Henion, Lobbyist for the COFA Alliance National network or CANN. CANN's mission is restore and reclaim the social and economic justice-rights of the COFA residents in Oregon and throughout the United States of the three Pacific island countries, which includes the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of Palau. It is these three countries that the US has a unique treaty, known as the Compact of Free Association, that guarantees their legal right to live, work and study here permanently.

Higher Education, of course is a critical component of there this restoration.

Now, In the 2019 session the Oregon legislature passed SB 263 which stated in section 1 paragraph 4:

*(4) A student who is a COFA islander and who has not previously established residence in any state or territory of the United States or the District of Columbia other than Oregon shall qualify for exemption from nonresident tuition and fees for enrollment in a public university listed in ORS 352.002.*

I believed then as I think most of us thought that this language would include COFA students attending OHSU. So, I was quite surprised when I received a telephone call from Rutha Pedrow a COFA Nursing student attending OHSU telling me that she was being charged out-of-state tuition rates. I then talked to Chair Dembrow who was equally surprised. I remember telling Rutha that I thought that the OHSU administration must have made a mistake and to hold tight we would investigate.

That's when we began to review the history of OHSU and found that In 1995, OHSU became a Public Non Profit Corporation separate from the Oregon State System of Higher education. This meant in effect that the Oregon state board of higher

education no longer was the governing body and OHSU adopted their own board of directors. Under the new charter the governor nominates the OHSU board members and the Senate approves.

As OHSU is one of the premier instructional institutions for health care occupations in Oregon offering nursing dental and public health education, including medical services for disabled children and indigent persons, CANN considers this bill essential to complete the intent of SB 263. We believe that this bill in essence should be viewed as a housekeeping measure. I believe that passage of SB 272 plugs an important hole in the intent of the legislature.

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