

Submitter: Kiera Roedel
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB604

Dear esteemed legislators,

I am a first-year student at Western Oregon University, which is Oregon's oldest public university, and I have lived in Oregon for my entire life. Last year, in September 2024, I participated in the Destination Western program at WOU, which is funded by the Strong Start Program funds. My experience at Destination Western was largely positive: I was able to learn my way around the campus, meet people, participate in some wonderful activities (some of us got to play laser tag!), and just generally have a great time. The program was guided by peers and involved academic as well as social aspects. By the time the program ended after 10 days, I felt much more thoroughly prepared for my first year of university.

Today, I'm majoring in political science in the hopes of working in the Oregon state government, and I have attained straight A's thus far, thanks in no small part to my experience with Destination Western. It was an invaluable experience for me as a college student, and it would be a shame if the funding were to be cancelled and future generations of Oregon university students were denied a similar experience to the one that I had.

Passing SB 604 would guarantee that incoming Western Oregon students could also participate in Destination Western for years to come, and I know that it funds similar experiences in other universities across the state, as well.

Thank you for your consideration.