

Submitter: Skylar Connolly

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Education

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB604

Hello, my name is Skylar, and I am a long-time recovered addict. I grew up in poverty and was orphaned by the age of 18. I struggled for years just to stay afloat. I worked Landscaping and manufacturing jobs for about 20 years. My body started to break down. I have had two knee replacements and at least 4 bad discs in my spine. I went back to school at 35. I enrolled in Chemeketa and obtained my associates degree there. I chose to come to WOU because I liked the idea of a smaller school, the location was great because my wife got her BSN at the OHSU nursing program that they run here at WOU. WOU is not literally and figuratively my home. I live in student family housing with my wife and our pets, I already have a bachelor's degree from WOU, I work in the financial aid department while I finish my last class for my master's degree in criminal justice, and I would stay if they had a Doctorate pathway for criminal justice. WOU has saved me from a life of poverty. They gave me a chance regardless of my path. Dr. Weitzel was my advisor for a long time, and she always encouraged me to go further. She said we will make your degree work for you. Higher education was the key for me. I am not saying anything bad about the trades because they are wonderful but that is not the path I wanted. With my body shutting down I wasn't going to hold up for another 25 years at least of physical labor. I could go on, but I am sure there are more of these to read. Thank you for your time.