



RE: HB 2939, Tuition Equity

The Honorable Sara Gelser
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Gelser and Members of the Education Committee,

As the presidents of Oregon's three largest public universities, we write in support of House Bill 2939 which would consider certain students to be residents for the purpose of determining tuition and fees at Oregon public universities.

In order for Oregon to maintain its competitive edge we must ensure that we are investing purposefully and wisely during this fiscal crisis. Higher education is an investment in the civic, social, and economic health of Oregon. Our institutions of higher education play a vital role in the economic development and social progress of our state as a whole. To this end, we are committed to providing access to an affordable quality education to *all* Oregon high school graduates.

Oregon has an opportunity. In the midst of the worst fiscal crisis in recent memory Oregon cannot afford to miss this chance to provide as many students with an education that allows them to fully contribute to our state. HB 2939 would grant in-state tuition to students who have lived in Oregon, attended Oregon schools, graduated from an Oregon high school, and been accepted to an Oregon University System institution, regardless of documentation status. This bill is an opportunity to continue the investment Oregon has made in students throughout their K-12 education. Of course, Oregon can only do its part. For tuition equity to truly work we must rely on Congress to pass the legislation we need to ensure that once students have graduated, they can be gainfully employed, can continue to pay state and federal taxes, and can create a legacy of economic well-being.

Many students who would benefit from this policy face insurmountable tuition costs despite an evident commitment to education and because of situations outside of their control. We can ensure that the State of Oregon has as many educated and productive residents, regardless of their status or the circumstances in which they have found themselves after years of Oregon's investment in their K-12 education. Regrettably, this initial investment is lost for many of Oregon's students.

As stated in the State Board of Higher Education's administration rules OAR 580-010-0029 through 580-010-0030, the primary issue in determining residency is one's intent to be permanently domiciled in Oregon. Students that will be affected by HB 2939 fit this criterion, and are fully worthy of in-state tuition rates to Oregon University System schools.

HB 2939 will ensure Oregon doesn't miss an opportunity to continue our initial investment and guarantee all Oregonians have access to a truly affordable post-secondary education. Please support HB 2939.

Sincerely,

Edward J. Ray
President
Oregon State University

Wim Wiewel
President
Portland State University

Dave Frohnmayer
President
University of Oregon