

Rep Alonso León, Sen. Dembrow, and Sen Wagner,

I'm writing to you as the chief sponsors of HB 2590, on behalf of NW Disability Support (NWDS). We support this bill, and are pleased to see efforts around identifying root causes of underrepresentation in higher education and taking steps toward remedies.

We believe that the education of students with disabilities needs to be included in equity discussions but often find it is not. We appreciate that this bill identifies that students with disabilities are a student body who are underrepresented, alongside other underrepresented groups (URG), in post-secondary institutions.

Our organization hosts the [Think Inclusive College West Coast Coalition](#). In 2015, we worked with students with disabilities, families, Portland Public Schools, Oregon Department of Education, Portland State University (PSU), and others to support PSU in receiving a federal Transition and Postsecondary Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (TPSID) grant to offer the first inclusive college program for students with intellectual/developmental disabilities (IDD) in Oregon. The first four year [Career and Community Studies](#) cohort graduated in 2020. One of the graduates is a staff member of ours.

To be sure HB 2590 is inclusive of all students with disabilities we would like to request a wording amendment to the bill. The current language limits students with disabilities to only those who “**have physical disabilities or learning disabilities**”. We would like to propose that existing language in Section 1(3)(e) be updated to “**Who experience disability (including intellectual developmental disabilities)**” as to not exclude those with vision, hearing, intellectual, and other disabilities who fall within the disability student body URG. We suggest specifically including intellectual developmental disabilities in the language as this student group is the last URG to have access to college.

Data regarding outcomes for students with intellectual developmental disabilities who attend college programs is more than compelling. [Think College National Coordinating Center](#) shares that students who obtain a paid job while enrolled in college were almost 15 times more likely to have a paid job at the exit of college than those who did not. They also share that earning a credential at an institution of higher education almost doubles the odds of having a paid job. And their data shows that 65% of students who complete a TPSID program had a paid job after college which is astonishing when we compare that to National Core Indicator data that shows only 17% of adults with IDD have a paid job.

College for all is important to everyone if we are looking through an equity lens. We hope HB 2590 will lay out a framework so state funding can be dedicated to investing in pathways for higher education for students with disabilities and other URG. We would like to see students with disabilities, including students with IDD, having increased access to inclusive higher education opportunities through Oregon Department of Education transition programs, Oregon Promise, the Higher Education Coordinating Commission, Vocational Rehabilitation, Oregon Developmental Disabilities Services, and other sources of state funding.

NW Disability Support is Oregon's federally funded [Community Parent Resource Center \(CPRC\)](#) and we can provide you with data and resources to support the inclusion of students with disabilities across their educational career. We know that everyone benefits when students with disabilities are included in education. Please consider us as your resource for postsecondary for students with disabilities. We would be happy to meet virtually to discuss this request and support HB 2590. Thank you for considering our request.

Jamie Burch,
NWDSA/ABI Projects and Community Coordinator
NW Disability Support