

No on SB 2787

March 3, 2013

Oregon Senate Committee
Higher Education and Workforce Development
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Testimony: No on HB 2787, instate tuition for international students illegally in the country.

Honorable Chairman Hass, Vice-Chairman Knopp and Committee Members:

My name is David Olen Cross and I am a resident of Salem, Oregon.

One of the great misnomers used by proponents of House Bill 2787 is to describe the legislation as “tuition equity” when what HB 2787 would do is to provide instate tuition to a special interest group of international students illegally in the country, while at the same time excluding those same benefits to legal American citizens in neighboring states — and proponents call that “tuition equity”.

Problematic with HB 2787 is the legislation has no sunset clause that would limit number of illegal international students who could receive instate tuition in the future; a lack of a sunset clause in the legislation will place a heavy economic burden on Oregon’s higher education system, cause an increase in tuition rates for students attending the state’s public universities and colleges, and cause an increased taxpayer burden to support state’s higher education system.

Crunching some numbers from neighboring Western Oregon University (WOU), for years 2012-2013, the estimated undergraduate tuition and fees (15-credits per term) for an Oregon resident is \$8,529 per year, while an international student is \$21,114 per year. Under HB 2787, WOU would be required to cut individual tuition and fees costs for illegal international students attending the university by \$12,585 per year. The result of the legislation becoming law, WOU would lose over a four-year period for every illegal international student attending the university \$50,340. Committee members: Who is going to make up the tuition shortfall? — The universities and colleges? — The students? — The taxpayers?

Also problematic with SB 2787 is the limited amount of years that would be required for illegal international students to spend in Oregon’s public schools to receive the benefit of instate tuition. A time of just three years attending an Oregon high school is not long enough for them or their foreign national parents, likewise illegally in the country, to have contributed enough in taxes to the bricks and mortar, the infrastructure, of Oregon’s universities and colleges to merit instate tuition.

No on SB 2787

Although Oregon taxpayers are often generous when it comes to the issues surrounding funding education, what might be considered as real “tuition equity” by the state’s taxpayers is that illegal international students must have completed at a minimum K-12 in the state’s public education system to be eligible to receive instate tuition.

A final recognizable flaw with HB 2787 is the legislation fails to put students who are United States citizens in the state (residents), students who are U.S. citizens from other states (non residents), and students who are foreign nationals (legal international students with visas from their countries of origin) first in line to attend Oregon’s universities and colleges, particularly in limited enrollment programs. Students legally present in the country should always be given first priority to enroll in the state’s universities and colleges.

Chairman Hass, Vice-Chairman Knopp and Committee Members, I thank the committee for hearing my testimony in opposition to HB 2787.

David Olen Cross
3440 Crestview Drive South
Salem, OR 97302

C/C:

Sen. Mark Hass, Chairman,
Sen. Tim Knopp, Vice-Chairman,
Sen. Lee Beyer,
Sen. Jeff Kruse,
Sen. Arnie Roblan.