



March 11, 2019

Testimony in Support of SB731

We support SB 731 which authorizes recognized student governments of community colleges and public universities to make statements and issue resolutions that address state and local initiatives and referenda. We deeply appreciate Senators Gelser and Dembrow for introducing this bill.

Student governments in Oregon are responsible for making and implementing decisions that support and maintain the safety of the student populations we serve. Ballot measures can frequently affect the students who attend universities in various ways -- either by extending or limiting our access to services, or indirectly by increasing or decreasing resources available to us from the institutions to which we pay tuition to attend. We believe student governments should be able to take positions regarding such measures.

Elected student governments are charged with developing and implementing multi-million dollar budgets that are drawn from student fees and that are apportioned to various student services. We develop and implement policies and programs that affect our daily lives on university and college campuses. In many ways we are no different from other local elected officials, including state legislators, city councilors and county commissioners who already enjoy the right to work with their colleagues on boards and commissions to routinely take positions on ballot measures.

SB 731 simply extends this process to elected student bodies so that we can represent and reflect the needs and values of our constituents. The bill is clear in retaining prohibitions against activities to support or opposition to individual candidates. Further it prohibits us from using student fees to actively engage in campaigns for or against candidates and measures. It simply enables us to make statements or take positions on ballot measures – just like any other locally elected official in Oregon.

We urge you to support this bill so that we join with other elected officials in representing their constituents as they are affected by Oregon's initiative and referendum process.

Sincerely,

**Associated Students of the University of Oregon
Associated Students of Oregon State University
American Civil Liberties Union – Oregon**