

I have been reflecting the times I have worked with Latino Americans in a kitchen, an orchard, or school. Some of the most arduous jobs our state are performed by the Latino American community, I applaud and thank them for that. That Oregon has not passed tuition equity legislation is a shame. It is estimated that by 2017 29% of our high school graduates will be Latin American (Western Interstate Commission for Higher Ed.). Tuition equity means that students who have graduated from an Oregon high school, have attended that school for at least three years and who are actively seeking proper documentation for their citizenship, will be conveyed the same in state tuition rates as other Oregon residents. We have already supported these undocumented students through their K-12 careers, now we are unable to continue our investment due to legislative oversight. Ten other states have enacted tuition equity policies including Texas, California and New Mexico. As the Latin population, and others who experience this disenfranchisement, continues to grow we must make Oregon stronger by supporting higher education for our fellow citizens. To not support tuition equity is to not support the advancement of our state and the young minds that will shape it.

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