

Dear Members of the House Education Committee:

I am sorry I could not attend your hearing today, I very much wanted to speak in favor of HB1177 and urge you to please vote for it, but my County Commissioner duties today prevent me from doing so.

This bill gives students a needed and meaningful voice on the CSU Board of Governors. Currently students have a non-voting member on this board. The students have been a valuable part of the board in this capacity, but as you know from boards we sit on as legislators, it just isn't as meaningful when you don't have a vote.

There are two main reasons to support this bill:

1. We are counting on students now more than ever to as key financial supporters of higher education. As our state support is unfortunately being reduced, students are being asked more than ever to support higher ed with their tuition and fee dollars. They deserve a greater voice in the governance of their institutions of which they are the main customers. It appears clear in the near future we will be calling on students for even greater support. Can we really expect them to chip in more when we don't even give them the right to vote on the Board?

2. Students are much more informed and involved in higher education issues than ever before. I served in the student government of CSU when I was a student. I am amazed at how much more engaged students are now. They are ready and capable of playing an important and constructive role on the Board.

I can think of no valid reason to oppose this bill. Students at CSU have clearly demonstrated they are ready to fulfill the role of a voting member on the Board, and we need their help and support if we are to maintain a relevant and excellent educational experience at CSU. This is the right thing to do and the time is right to do it.

Please support HB 1177.

Best regards,
Steve Johnson
former Senator and Representative.