

Dear Members of the Committee on Budget and Taxation,

My name is Chaim (Freddy) Freedman, and my story is more unique than my name. The short version is that I grew up poor in a Jewish-Orthodox community, a faith which I do not believe in, and my only way out was college. That is not itself a bad thing- college has a lot of value. However, I was left to my own devices to get myself here, which meant I had to figure out everything from the application process to the finances by myself. It was a great developmental experience and I am better for it, but it was also the first of many experiences that taught me what it means to struggle.

My education has gone well (I will be graduating Summa Cum Laude in May), but I changed my major many times along the way. Originally starting in the STEM field with a major in exercise science, I quickly switched to philosophy, which was then uprooted by my current degree in interdisciplinary studies. I entered college with what aggregated to be a full scholarship, but parts of it disappeared once I was no longer a part of the STEM field. I have since taken out federal loans and am scraping by, but I keep a very close watch on my finances.

My dear friend Nate Sansom made me aware of this bill and the details around it just recently, and I immediately shared his passion for supporting it. I felt that my story relates to the SB 904 bill in a very simple way, and I saw an opportunity to prevent others from facing some of the challenges that I did. The average student is projected to spend around \$660 on textbooks in the coming school year, and the tax cut proposed in this bill would save 6% of that: roughly \$40. While this is a relatively small number, this is pretty much my budget for food for a week. I would be remiss if I didn't take this opportunity to share my struggle and say that a simple tax cut on textbooks will help me and many students like me afford food.

Thank you for taking the time to read and engage with my story. I hope that this letter will help you help thousands of students every year.

Sincerely,

Freddy Freedman