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The Honorable Jeff Hickman  
Speaker of the Oklahoma House of Representatives

March 12, 2015

Dear Speaker Hickman/Jeff:

First of all, as you know, I am not a lobbyist! I am a former House member, I am a national consultant on child welfare/foster care. Perhaps most importantly, I am a grandmother who raised her grandchild until she was 13. She is now with her mother, she is a senior in high school, and she is slated to use the OHLAP scholarship next year at UCO.

I am very concerned about unintended consequences of **HB 2180**, which requires that, in order to maintain eligibility, college students using Oklahoma's Promise complete 30 credit hours per academic year (exceptions for major medical and family death).

Youth needing the support (both financially and in terms of commitment to positive behaviors to maintain qualification) have all been disadvantaged already and have experienced some and generally several of the ACES markers toward negative life and health outcomes. As you will read in this link, the ACE Study is one of the largest scientific research studies of its kind, with over 17,000 mostly middle income Americans participating. The focus was to analyze the relationship between **childhood trauma** (including the absences of one or more parents and poverty factors) and the risk for **physical and mental illness in adulthood**. (Please read this link. It is short but imperative!)

<http://www.americasangel.org/research/adverse-childhood-experiences-ace-study/>

To require these youth to complete 30 college credits per year is simply unreasonable for many. They must address all of the challenges any college youth faces, but they still carry their trauma, family 'legacies' and worries, and lack of supportive and sufficient relationships and resources with them....something most college youth are not burdened with. Furthermore, families that can pay for college without OHLAP can allow their child to do 12 credit hours a semester. While all parents hope their child graduates in 4 years, more affluent families have choices. The 15 credit-hour requirement inadvertently stigmatizes the already disadvantaged student by adding additional pressure (and consequences) not present for other youth and inadvertently contributes to their lifetime of inadequate supports.

I will be at the Capitol this Monday when former House members gather at the start of Session. I know how busy you are and appreciate your leadership and the demands that role brings. If you have a few moments to discuss my concern about HB 2180 (or if we might do so through email or phone), I would be most grateful.

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Please let me know that you have received this letter.

I look forward to returning to the House on Monday.

Respectfully and with gratitude,

Laura W. Boyd, Ph.D.  
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