



MARION COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

JASON MYERS, SHERIFF

March 21, 2017

Representative Jeff Reardon, Chair
House Committee on Higher Education and Workforce Development
Oregon State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Marion County Sheriff's Office Supports HB 2540

Dear Chair Reardon and Committee Members:

I'm writing in support of HB 2540. This bill, if passed as written, will give community college boards the ability to request state approval from the Higher Education Coordinating Commission to award Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degrees under certain conditions.

My Office has experienced difficulties in recruiting nurses to work in our local Jail. This has been a trend throughout the state, and I believe it will become a more pressing concern as retirements increase from the "baby boomers" generation. HB 2540 will pave the way to provide a cost-effective opportunity for individuals seeking a nursing career to earn a bachelor's degree at their local community college in lieu of needing to relocate from their community of residence.

As a community college, Chemeketa is currently limited to awarding the two year nursing degree that allows graduates to become licensed as a registered nurse. Julie Huckestein, President and CEO of Chemeketa Community College has met with multiple organizations in Marion, Polk, and Yamhill counties that employ registered nurses, along with community leaders who voiced their support of Chemeketa offering a BSN. I believe a program in Salem will serve local students, employers and the regional workforce alike.

The passage of HB 2540 is a critical first step in this process. Additional requirements must also be met such as the authorization from accrediting agencies and oversight from the Oregon State Board of Nursing before a college could offer a BSN program.

For the health, safety and future wellbeing of local communities, I ask you to support HB 2540.

Sincerely,

Jason Myers, Sheriff

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"To whom much is entrusted, much is expected."