

TESTIMONY OF DAVID CHILDERS

April 11, 2017

Chairman Reardon, members of the committee,

My name is David Childers, and I am the former Chair of the Oregon Talent Council.

For the past two and one-half years, I have sought to improve the relationship between Oregon's Higher Education establishment and Oregon industry. Prior to my service on the Oregon Talent Council, I was Vice Chair of ETIC. I have been blessed to be financially successful in Oregon, and my efforts these past few years has been directed helping other entrepreneurs and growth businesses in the State.

The Oregon Talent Council was established by House Bill 2728 in July 2015 to address the critical gap in skilled talent across the state and promote economic growth. The Council was comprised of a diverse group of industry leaders from multiple sectors who were committed to bringing together necessary constituencies, resources, and knowledge to make strategic co-investments, and be a loud voice for growing high wage jobs in key industries across the state. The Oregon Talent Council was also charged with developing the Oregon Talent Plan which was designed to identifying talent issues and industry trends related to traded sector and high growth industries.

The Oregon Talent Council was eliminated in the 2017-2019 budget preparation cycle. I resigned from the Council after what I considered to be an open and reasonable attempt to discuss the merits of the Talent Council with the Governor's Office.

Accordingly, I appreciate the efforts of Representative Reardon and hope that his voice for change in this State will be heard. The Oregon Talent Council identified several critical issues. Primarily we identified the gap of understanding between what Oregon's industries needed in terms of talent development was dramatically different than what Oregon's higher education system was producing. The needs of talent development were not limited to new graduates. In fact, our studies and interviews showed that most the worker talent was already in the workforce, and it was the retraining and continuing education of the workforce that was equally as important as new education.

I am here today in support of the proposed HB 3437. My hope is that HB 3437 will evolve into a sustained opportunity for Oregon to grow jobs and value. There is much that I can share, but I realize that the Committee's time is valuable so I close by saying that Oregon has an incredible opportunity to define a positive future. Without talent, and the ability to develop needed talent, we will never reach our potential. So, I ask this committee to perhaps look beyond the modest ask of HB 3437 and see what could happen in our State if we aligned the needs of industry with the efforts of our higher education system.

I am happy to take your questions.