



Senator James I. Manning Jr.
Senate District 7 | Eugene, Junction City
Oregon State Legislature | State Capitol | Salem, OR

TESTIMONY

SB 1028

Chair Burdick, members of the Committee. For the record, I'm James Ivory Manning Jr, State Senator representing North and West Eugene and Junction City. I'm here in support of SB 1028, in its current form and I thought I'd take a few minutes to provide an update to this bill.

I introduced SB 1028 on behalf of a constituent advocate who many of you may know, David Beem. This bill received a hearing and work session in the Senate Committee on General Government and Accountability and received no opposition. It also has bipartisan support.

On the day the bill was scheduled for a Senate floor vote, a few issues were brought to my attention and I thought I'd address each of those. I believe that each of these concerns has been addressed and that no amendment is necessary moving forward.

The bill as introduced does this: it allows for state licensing boards to consider adopting a change to their current licensing requirements, allowing for on-the-job

experience to fulfill a high school diploma or GED requirement if this is the highest level of education required. It very intentionally states that the board *may*, rather than that they *shall*, consider this change. This was my intention of the bill.

The concerns that were raised dealt with any potential unintended consequences that might be a result of the passage of this bill. Specifically, that a person who is not qualified for a state license, would be allowed to acquire one without oversight. In my staff's conversation with Legislative Counsel, it was explained that of the nearly 1000 state licenses or certifications awarded in the state of Oregon, not one currently requires ONLY a high school diploma, GED or equivalent. In 100% of the cases, an application, a fee, a form and often a course and/or test must be completed and passed in order to acquire a license. This eliminates the concern that a licensing board would be forced into providing a license to an under-qualified individual and face this as an unintended consequence of this bill. Because these changes would be completely optional for a licensing board, they would have made a conscious decision to waive this educational requirement, and could elect to impose a new standard of their choosing, for an applicant to demonstrate competency in any particular skill or trade.

The other primary concern raised, had to do with a request to clarify that in the event unintended consequences were to occur, it be placed on the record that the Legislature be willing to revisit the change made by this bill and amend it accordingly at a future date. This was determined to be unnecessary because licensing boards and other certification entities in the state of Oregon, currently have the full authority to establish their specific licensing requirements and criteria, by rule. They do not need to go to the Legislature for approval in the event that a board adopts a new rule and wishes to later change it, unless of course, it's being specifically directed by the Legislature. And because of the use of "May" rather than "Shall" this bill is not directing them to act.

Lastly the question did arise as to whether the bill was necessary and the consensus was that this bill very specifically directs licensing entities to take up this issue and to discuss whether or not new policies, procedures or testing measures could or should be considered to provide opportunities for individuals who possess a very specific skillset applicable to a job, but were not able to complete their primary education. It also codifies the

fact that the Legislature would be supportive of such efforts and would not seek to modify/undo the circumstances through legislation, should a board choose to adopt more expansive policies.

Honorable colleagues, there are many reasons as to why a young person may not have the opportunity to complete his or her primary education. Often a person is forced to contribute a paycheck to their household and is unable to stay in school because they must help to put food on the table for their siblings. Other circumstances may be due to a disability or a struggle with learning that keeps them from graduating or getting a GED. This bill just may go a long way to pave a path for someone who has a strong and proven competency to carry out a specific job and give them a chance at a career and a chance to thrive, rather than just struggle through life.

I strongly support this bill and I would ask that the Committee send the bill back the floor, as introduced, for a floor vote. I am happy to answer any questions of the committee.