



Patsy Richards

Director of Long-Term CareWorks | RISE Partnership

Testimony in Support of SB 1545

February 3, 2022

Dear Chair Taylor, Vice-Chair Knopp, and members of the Senate Committee on Labor and Business:

My name is Patsy Richards and I serve as the Director of Long-Term CareWorks at RISE Partnership, a partnership between five labor-management trusts in Oregon created to improve the delivery of training and benefits for Oregon's workforce, and leverage resources for better worker experiences. I also co-chaired the Racial Justice Council's Workforce Workgroup. I'm writing on behalf of RISE Partnership today, **in full support of SB 1545.**

As we all know, Oregon is facing a decades-long workforce crisis that requires immediate intervention. Many believe this crisis was created by the pandemic, but the truth is, Oregon has had an ongoing workforce crisis that the pandemic has only exacerbated and exposed.

There have always been workforce barriers for our most vulnerable populations — people of color, people with low incomes, Black, Indigenous, Latino/a/x and rural Oregonians have long struggled to access the resources they need to succeed in the workforce. They faced barriers to entry, job readiness, job training, career advancement, and accessible child care in a pre-pandemic world, but now the disparities are even more significant.

In addition to existing barriers, we know that our workforce is changing. Technology is advancing. Our workforce is aging. Ideals are shifting.

Right now, Millennials make up 35% of the U.S. workforce. By 2030, 75% of our workforce will be Millennials, as Baby Boomers will have a mass exodus from the workforce over the next 5-10 years. It's time for Oregon's workforce to catch up to and prepare for the change already in motion. Having a thriving workforce 10, 20 and 30 years from now means removing barriers to the workforce **now**. Investing in the future means investing right now — we cannot keep waiting.

The Future Ready Oregon workforce package and SB 1545 are an essential first step to addressing these crises and investing in the future. In this package, our broad coalition of partners has committed to workforce development that:

1. **Removes barriers to increase access and expand workforce impact**, ensuring there are no invisible people in Oregon, and that workforce investments are done through the lens of **equity**.
2. **Addresses skilled labor shortages with new and innovative education and training opportunities**, so that key Oregon industries have the workforce they need to keep our state's health, safety and economy afloat.
3. **Creates career pathways that lead to sustainable wages**, by creating stackable and transferable credentials, and leveraging and expanding upon existing successful programs.

The Racial Justice Council Workgroup I co-chaired defined **workforce development** as “education and training that leads to employment.” We need our state to invest in workforce development, because it is the connective tissue between employers and individuals seeking employment or advanced career opportunities. In 2022, we have a historic opportunity to invest in Oregonians and advance change in our workforce.

Future Ready Oregon is a comprehensive \$200 million package of workforce development investments to give employment-seekers the education, training and resources they need to get, keep and grow into good-paying jobs. Without

supporting Oregon employees, Oregon employers, businesses and infrastructure cannot function.

This package will invest in key sectors in Oregon, specifically in health care, construction and manufacturing. With increased investments in infrastructure and housing, an aging workforce, and record retirements in these industries, it's essential to invest in these sectors now. These sectors provide pathways to meaningful employment and high earning potential, and are essential industries for communities across Oregon to thrive.

We have the infrastructure in place to expedite these solutions and begin addressing our workforce crisis, aiming investments in programs that address existing, persistent inequities in the workforce system and preparing us for the changes we know are coming.

We have the structures in place — we just need the investment. For these reasons, **I urge your support for Future Ready Oregon and ask that you vote YES on SB 1545.**

Thank you,

Patsy Richards
Director of Long-Term CareWorks Trust
RISE Partnership



Respect
Integrity
Service
Equity

Long-Term CareWorks provides workers in Oregon skilled nursing facilities and other long-term care facilities with training, apprenticeship, and mentorship to help them thrive in their career.

RISE Partnership delivers outstanding training and benefits with a focus on equity and worker-employer collaboration. Together with unions and employers, we are proud to support over 80,000 Oregon care providers and state employees.