

## Mark Mitsui Future Ready Oregon Testimony

Thank you Chair Taylor and members of the committee for the opportunity to testify today. For the record, my name is Mark Mitsui and I am the President of Portland Community College. We are the largest post-secondary institution in Oregon, serving over 50,000 students each year and are one of the most diverse colleges. And, we strongly support SB 1545, the Future Ready Oregon bill.

SB 1545 will connect hard-working Oregonians with living wage careers through education and training that bridges skills gaps for employers and equity gaps for marginalized communities, in three high need sectors; construction, manufacturing and health care.

SB 1545 would expand and improve workforce education strategies with track records of success for underrepresented communities, including \$17M for Career Pathways Programs and \$10M for credit for prior learning. Career Pathways feature short term training programs, and stackable credentials that lead to a degree and living wage careers. Program Navigators help students stay on track and connect with them with wraparound services. Two recent PCC Career Pathways student cohorts had completion rates of 88% overall, and 90% for BIPOC students.

Credit for prior learning allows community college students to earn college credit for previous coursework, experience and skills. That saves students time and money.

Additionally, SB 1545 invests in new competitive workforce grants to strengthen the partnerships between workforce actors, including culturally specific CBO's and anchor institutions like community colleges in order to create diverse talent pipelines **from** marginalized communities to community colleges and then to employers.

A friend of mine, Dr. Eduardo Padron, president emeritus of Miami Dade College likes to say, "Talent is universal, but opportunity is not."

SB 1545 is about making opportunity as universal as the talent around us so that no matter where you were born, no matter what zip code you have, you have the opportunity to earn a better life through education and training.