



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT | ROSS TOMLIN, Ed.D.

Oregon Legislature Senate Committee on Education
Testimony for SB 523
March 2, 2023

Dear Committee,

I am the President of Tillamook Bay Community College (TBCC) and am providing written testimony in support of SB 523 that would allow community colleges to offer a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree. The ability to offer this degree is extremely important especially to our rural areas like the north coast of Oregon and Tillamook County.

TBCC is working on getting approval to offer a two-year nursing degree with the State Board of Nursing. We will then be the last community college in Oregon to get a nursing program. Our plan is to start offering classes next year once approved later this year. Our community is very excited for TBCC to offer a nursing program so we can grow our own nurses in Tillamook County.

Our community is even more excited at the possibility of offering a BSN degree for our nursing graduates as well as for other nurses currently working in the county. Many nurses would be interested in earning a BSN but do not pursue it due to cost or the inability to travel to a place that has a program. TBCC would offer the degree at a lower cost than other programs and would allow local nurses the ability to get a quality education without traveling away from home. Our program would also include more hands-on training than an online program that typically does not include clinical or lab experiences. Also, many of our students are part of underserved groups that simply do not have the opportunity to pursue this option anywhere outside of their home county, which is isolated from the rest of Oregon.

Our local hospitals in Tillamook County are very supportive of this bill as it would provide them with a higher percentage of BSN-trained nurses. With our two-year nursing program starting up next year, our first graduates would be able to stay on to earn the BSN without leaving the area.

There is a huge need for nurses in our state, especially in the rural areas. The only way it is feasible to raise the percentage of BSN nurses in the state is to provide more RN-BSN training programs, and the community colleges are ready and able to meet this challenge. The Institute of Medicine Future of Nursing Initiative has recommended having 80% of nurses at the BSN level, yet only 62% of Oregon nurses are at the BSN level. The ability for community colleges to offer this degree will help a great deal to raise this percentage and help meet that important goal.

I do hope you all will support the passing of SB 523. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ross Tomlin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ross" being larger and more prominent than the last name "Tomlin".

Ross Tomlin, Ed.D.
President