

March 1, 2023

Dear State of Oregon Legislature Members:

I am the Financial Aid Director at Oregon Coast Community College. I support SB 523 because it will allow the HECC to approve Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degrees at Oregon community Colleges. Passing this bill will provide further education and career opportunities for students---especially rural, economically disadvantaged, and/or place bound students.

Senate Bill 523 will provide community colleges the opportunity to offer a lower-cost option for AAS Nursing graduates to seamlessly continue their academic journey in an educational setting where they have established relationships with faculty, a familiar and supportive learning environment, and an a more affordable option accessible to them without uprooting their families.

In addition, the passage of SB 523 will help address the nursing shortages in underserved or marginalized populations. Having a viable local and affordable option for nursing students to advance their credentials is critical to meeting healthcare needs. This is especially true in rural areas, where there are well-documented “health care deserts.” Furthermore, the Institute of Medical (IOM) Future of Nursing Initiative has recommended hospitals strive to achieve 80% BSN prepared nurses, but it can be difficult for rural hospitals to recruit staff to rural areas where housing is difficult to find. Senate Bill 523 will allow rural areas to “grow their own” BSN graduates to serve their communities.

Community Colleges in the state of Oregon have a proven and well-documented record of student success—85.8% of ADN graduates successfully completed the RN certification exam in 2021. Allowing Community Colleges to Confer BSN Degrees will provide greater opportunities for students in the community the reside in and serve.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Jones
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