

Submitter: Holly Buckem
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Education
Measure: SB523

Dear Chair Dembrow and Members of the Senate Education Committee,

I am writing to express my support for Senate Bill 523, which would authorize the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) to approve Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degrees at Oregon community colleges. This bill would provide better, more equitable opportunities for students, address local healthcare workforce needs, and provide a more affordable pathway to a BSN for students across the state. A community college option for earning a BSN degree would increase access to 4-year nursing degrees across Oregon, particularly in rural areas. Furthermore, students with a BSN have more opportunities for promotion and higher pay. Many community college RN graduates are currently paying more expensive out-of-state, online providers to attain a BSN, which is not a viable option for all students. By offering a local community college alternative, students would have a more affordable career pathway and an opportunity to continue their education with familiar faculty, learning environments, and student support. Please support Senate Bill 523 to help address the nursing shortage and provide more equitable outcomes for underserved populations.

When I attended Lane Community College as an ADN student, I would have loved the opportunity to obtain my BSN immediately after from the same community college. Instead, I waited seven years to feel comfortable enough financially that I could obtain my BSN from an out-of-state online university without going into debt; which then paved the way for me to obtain a Master of Science in Nursing (MSN), and to later become faculty. The opportunities that SB523 would provide to our community college students are significant!

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Holly Buckem MSN, RN, CNE, CNEcl
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