

TO: Chair Dembrow, Vice-Chair Suzanne Weber, and Members of the Senate Committee on Education
FROM NURSING STUDENT: Emily Phillips

DATE: March 3, 2023

RE: Support for the SB 523

Dear Senators of the State Committee on Education:

I am currently enrolled as a nursing student in the ADN program offered at Klamath Community College. This is the second degree I am receiving, as I previously attended a four-year university, receiving a Bachelor's degree in dental hygiene. I can't express enough, my satisfaction level with the education I am currently receiving. My hope is to continue furthering my education after completing my RN degree. At this point, I am still undecided about where my education will take me, but at minimum, I plan to complete a Master's degree. Considering the worldwide nursing shortage, missing the opportunity to allow a high-achieving nursing program to offer a bridge to BSN, seems to be a huge disservice to the population. I have built a family in this basin and leaving to continue my education is not a practical option. Additionally, the amount in loans to obtain my BSN at a university is a large deterrent.

Underserved Community. Klamath Community College is located in rural Klamath Falls, where the health care needs are extensive. Offering a local RN to BSN program would improve the health in an underserved part of the state. I am native to this area and have deep roots. My hope is to continue my education to create more opportunities for increased access for my family and friends. For many years now, I have experienced countless tragedies due to lack of access. Being seen for primary care has become a huge burden, with appointments booked months, if not years out. Not to mention trying to get an appointment with secondary or specialized care. Personally, my children have had their annual well-child visits pushed out for 10 months due to no availability with their provider. This is unacceptable. Our community is in desperate need of more providers, such as Advanced Practice Nurses (Nurse Practitioners) and more education. Scheduling any type of medical appointment has become such a frustration for so many, that patient concerns and symptoms are being put off until they turn into an emergency or are too advanced to treat.

Allowing increased access to education in rural communities is key to improving health. Shouldn't this be a top priority? Lack of knowledge and care is creating higher healthcare costs for every one of us, not to discount the decrease in quality of life for so many. If a program is willing and capable to advance quality education in this time of medical need, why wouldn't we make this happen? Thank you for taking the time to consider these concerns.

Emily Phillips

Nursing Student