



April 8th, 2023

Joint Ways and Means Committee
Honorable Co-Chair Sen. Elizabeth Steiner
Honorable Co-Chair Rep. Tawna Sanchez
Honorable Co-Vice Chair Sen. Fred Girod
Honorable Co-Vice Chair Rep. David Gomberg
Honorable Vice Chair Rep. Greg Smith

RE: Testimony in support of SB 5524, HB 2908, and funding for Oregon Community Colleges

Co-Chairs Steiner and Sanchez, and Co-Vice Chairs Girod, Gomberg, and Smith, and members of the committee,

My name is Jon Isaacs, and I am the Vice President of Public Affairs for the Portland Business Alliance.

The Portland Business Alliance (the Alliance) is greater Portland's Chamber of Commerce and represents the largest, most diverse network of businesses in the region. The Alliance advocates for business at all levels of government to support commerce, community health, and the region's overall prosperity. We represent over 2,100 members, from 27 counties, 14 states, and virtually every industry sector. More than 80% of our members are small businesses.

I am here today to speak to SB 5524 and HB 2908 and express the Alliance's strong support for funding for Oregon's community colleges and Small Business Development Centers (SBDC).

The Alliance has had a long and successful relationship with SBDC and Portland Community College through the PBA Small Business Management program. Demand for this program always exceeds its capacity. Since 2011 this public private partnership has strengthened and supported 147 small businesses through tuition sponsored by the Alliance. In aggregate, these businesses have seen impressive growth leading to 276 new jobs, \$8.8M in capital, \$7.4M in new contracts and \$13.3M of increased sales over the previous year.

The SBDC has been and instrumental partner in our service to small business and Portland area entrepreneurs, and we urge the committee to fully fund the OBDD budget via SB 5524. We also urge the committee to support HB 2908 for Small Business Development Center (SBDC) grant funding to drive economic development and expand local services and urge the committee to continue investing in Oregon's community colleges.

Since the pandemic, Oregon's community colleges have continued to adapt and innovate to meet the rapidly changing needs and circumstances of students and the workforce. Now, more than ever we need our community college partners to provide workforce training through career technical education and other critical programs that train Oregonians to succeed in the 21st century economy and provide a pipeline of skilled workers for Oregon's employers.

The Portland Business Alliance urges you to fully fund Oregon's SBDCs through SB 5524 and HB 2908, and to fully fund Oregon's community colleges. Thank you.

Jon Isaacs (*he/him*)

Vice President, Public Affairs

PORTLAND BUSINESS ALLIANCE

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