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March 1, 2023

Subject: SB523, Allowing Community Colleges to Confer BSN Degrees

Dear Legislator Members:

I am writing to express my support for SB523, Allowing Community Colleges to Confer BSN Degrees. The support for the passing of this Bill will provide further education and career opportunities for students. Rural colleges often struggle to provide a plethora of opportunities for students to continue their educational progress. As a rural community college, Bill523 would provide students the opportunity to earn a BSN degree and the access to pursue and earn a 4-year nursing degree. In addition, Bill523 would provide students with opportunities to further their studies and career opportunities.

Oregon Coast Community College is a coastal community college and has a very successful AAS Nursing program, which is always enrolled at full capacity and has a high success rate. Our students usually have positions waiting for them in local hospitals and medical institutions before graduation, and are highly motivated to pursue their RN degree. The ability to offer this educational option for them locally while they retain their working positions in the nursing field would go a long way to addressing pent-up demand in the labor market for these professionals and help the state improve health care prospects for all its citizens.

The passing of this Bill will thus enable the state and its community colleges to offer a lower-cost option for RN graduates to further their academic endeavors, permitting these professionals to maintain their healthcare positions locally and continue their academic journey in the same institution where they have fostered relationships with staff and peers. It will allow them to earn a 4-year degree without having to increase their financial burden substantially.

The approval of Bill523 will have a significant impact on the nursing and health profession shortages. This Bill will also open the door to opportunities for BSN Community College graduates to pursue additional credentials, certifications, and degrees. Rural Oregon suffers from “health care deserts” and Bill523 provides community colleges, especially rural colleges, the opportunity to fill the health care gap in their communities. The efficacy of Community Colleges as it relates to awarding certificates and degrees for the successful completion of the program is well-documented

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and the passing of Bill523 will provide even greater opportunities for students to flourish academically and be better equipped to serve their community.

Please vote in favor of SB523- Allowing Community Colleges to Confer BSN Degrees. Thank you for helping our students have greater educational opportunities.

Regards,

Ann Hovey

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