

To: Oregon House of Representatives  
From: Shelby Johnston  
Current ADN Nursing Student, Oregon Coast Community College  
Date: April 23, 2023  
RE: Support for SB 523

Dear Oregon House of Representatives Members,

I am a current nursing student at Oregon Coast Community College, and I am writing to let you know why I am in support of SB 523.

On the coast here, there are not many resources for students. OCCC is the closest nursing program for anyone who lives from Tillamook to Florence, so if anyone wanted to pursue a BSN degree, they would have to leave the amazing community on the coast to do that. In small communities like the coast, we are unable to look at other schools nearby, because the closest schools are at least an hour and a half away. This would mean having to apply to multiple schools to see where we get in, having to find new housing, and having to leave all our community of friends and instructors behind. Having to uproot from a community that I am settled in would cause a lot of stress, and staying here at OCCC would relieve me of that stress.

I have enjoyed going to OCCC, because of the tight community that is here. I enjoy being in a class size of less than 30 and getting to know all my peers and having my instructors know me by name. Not many people going to college get that luxury. Being able to know everyone I am going to class with allows me to be comfortable and enhances my learning as a student. Going to a small school like OCCC enhances my learning because I am more comfortable asking questions and there is more one on one time with instructors. At Oregon Coast CC, I feel a sense of safety and that my instructors care about my learning. I attended a university in Washington before coming to OCCC, and I never felt that sense of caring at the university.

School is very expensive. On the coast, I live with my parents, so I do not have to pay rent. Because of this, I am very fortunate. Having to leave the coast for my BSN would add the cost of housing to my bills. School is already expensive enough, so having to pay for housing would be adding another stressor to my life that I would not have if SB 523 passed. The price of school is already a barrier for many students, so allowing a BSN degree at a community college rather than a university will allow many more students to advance their career.

Passing SB 523 would also be benefiting many communities around Oregon. Many hospitals or departments require that nurses have their BSN or are in the process of obtaining their BSN when they are hired. Allowing community colleges to offer RN to BSN degrees will allow more ADN students to get their bachelor's immediately after the associate's program is done. This allows for more qualified nurses to be entering the workforce at a time when we need them the most.

Thank you for your time and consideration,  
Shelby Johnston