



TESTIMONY OF JOHN WYKOFF ON HB 3223-A4

Chair Patterson, members of the committee, for the record, I'm John Wykoff, Deputy Director for the Oregon Community College Association. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today.

We appreciate the attempt in the -A4 amendment to create alternative pathways for dental assisting certification as opposed to the outright banning of national board exam requirements as was proposed in the base bill. However, community college dental assisting directors believe there is value in having an impartial third-party administer the tests that, on some level, assess how well the colleges have trained students. Having impartial third-party evaluation has value to both the student and the program being offered. For that reason, colleges would be unlikely to offer such a pathway.

The other concern we have is that the requirement in the amendment that any test be offered in a minimum of three of the top languages in Oregon could mean the Oregon Board of Dentistry (OBD) could not use any national exams for a prolonged period of time, if not altogether. The third most spoken language varies from state to state and region, which would presumably prolong the time it would take for OBD to utilize any national board exams.

We wholeheartedly agree that having exams in only English is a barrier to access, but if an impartial third-party providers couldn't meet the third-language requirement, none would be available. It is worth noting that, currently, board exams for dentists and hygienists are also only available in English. We would urge a comprehensive approach addressing barriers in the profession beyond dental assisting alone.

We think these issues highlight the inherent complexity in how and whether to require board exam certifications in dental professions. While we appreciate the attempt to create alternate pathways, we are concerned this -A4 amendment would functionally ban OBD from utilizing currently available impartial third-party board exams.

Last week's OBD meeting was another example of the complexities involved in the issue as several board members voiced significant concerns about removing board exam requirements, which we believe suggests the issue requires further stakeholder discussion and educator engagement. OCCA continues to believe an interim work group that can address these issues and recommend legislation for 2024 would be the best way forward at this time. We look forward to continuing to work with the legislation's advocates and the Legislature to address these issues moving forward.