



5 February 2026

Senate Committee on Commerce and General Government
Oregon Legislature

Chair Meek, Vice Chair Drazen, and Members of the Committee:

RE: Senate Bill 1512 - Support

My name is Jimmy Jones, and I am the Executive Director of the Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency (MWVCAA) in Salem. We serve low-income residents of Marion, Polk, and nine other counties across Oregon. Annually, MWVCAA administers more than \$80 million in services and direct assistance supporting housing stability, homelessness response, energy and weatherization, and early learning programs for tens of thousands of Oregonians. Through our workforce development programs, MWVCAA supports individuals facing significant barriers to employment. We have served 169 individuals with workforce development support, filed expungements for 226 community members to remove barriers to employment, and in only 2 cohorts, helped 17 participants earn AWS Structural Welding credentials that open pathways to jobs starting at \$23 per hour.

I am writing to express strong support for Senate Bill 1512, which strengthens and expands the Prosperity 10,000 workforce initiative and reinforces Oregon's commitment to locally driven workforce strategies that advance economic mobility.

Prosperity 10,000 has been a critical resource for expanding workforce access and opportunity for individuals who face structural and systemic barriers to employment. Through this investment, MWVCAA has implemented high-impact workforce initiatives, including hands-on skills training through our welding program, a pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship pathway for early childhood educators, criminal record expungement clinics that remove legal barriers to employment, and Community Career Coaching that provides individualized employment navigation. Collectively, these efforts support more than 1,000 individuals each year in progressing beyond entry-level work and toward stable, living-wage career pathways.

Workforce success depends on addressing multiple barriers simultaneously. Job training alone is insufficient when individuals are constrained by criminal records, limited access to career guidance, or systemic challenges navigating employment systems. We know firsthand that meaningful workforce participation requires more than job training alone, it requires access to the wraparound supports that make employment possible. Through essential supports such as transportation, childcare, rental assistance, and paid work experiences, Prosperity 10,000 helps ensure that individuals can fully engage in training and employment pathways.

Prosperity 10,000's flexible framework enables local workforce boards and community partners to integrate services in ways that reflect local labor markets and participant needs. This adaptability strengthens outcomes and ensures a strong return on public investment. Importantly, SB 1512 recognizes the critical role of nonprofit community-based organizations in delivering workforce services and ensures local boards consider an entity's demonstrated experience and employer engagement when distributing funds.

For these reasons, I urge your support for Senate Bill 1512 as a vital investment in Oregon's workforce and economic future. Thank you for your leadership and dedication to ensuring all Oregonians have access to pathways to stability and success.

Respectfully,


Jimmy Jones
Executive Director