



April 5, 2021

Senate Committee on Education
900 Court Street NE, Room 453
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Dembrow and Committee Members:

The Ashland Chamber of Commerce supports SB623 because:

- The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in the steepest economic downturn since the Great Depression. And the major impacts from wildfire disaster has added even greater economic suffering.
- Over 130,000 Oregonians are still unemployed and the most severely impacted are less educated, low-wage individuals - especially women, communities of color, and younger workers.
- This circumstance of crisis has revealed **serious flaws** in the systems intended to serve and support Oregonians during difficult times.

SB 623:

- Leverages and aligns existing resources, programs, services, and relationships to ensure people and businesses have access to the broadest array of available resources and services.
- Empowers the legislature and our communities as partners in implementing equitable, effective approaches to state-funded workforce development programs.
- Emphasizes the need to inform program design and delivery at the local level and provides the structure to “meet people where they are.”
- Offers a comprehensive, holistic approach that brings multiple systems and partners together and promotes collective action.
- Provides a mechanism to identify and scale best practices, understand system shortcomings, and fill service and resource gaps.

Please pass this legislation as soon as possible, so we can provide help and resources to individuals in our community.

With appreciation,

Sandra Slattery

Executive Director, Ashland Chamber of Commerce