



February 8, 2022

Senator Kathleen Taylor, Chair
Senate Committee on Labor and Business
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street, NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Chair Taylor and Members of the Senate Committee on Labor and Business,

I write on behalf of Oregon Community Foundation (OCF) to urge your support for SB 1545, which would authorize much-needed investments to make Oregon's workforce system more equitable and racially diverse. Culturally and linguistically specific career connected learning that emphasizes recruitment, retention, and career advancement for BIPOC, under resourced rural communities and other underrepresented communities is critical to addressing the workforce and economic disparities that have been exacerbated by COVID.

Much of OCF's strategic work – from grants and loans to community partnerships and activity in the policy realm – is focused on addressing gaps in opportunity for Oregonians who have been most affected by historic disparities. SB 1545 scales current programs that have proven to be effective in providing the training, education, and wraparound supports needed to increase success for marginalized populations. It also lays out new investments that have been shown to work in other subject areas and adapts them to workforce, including partnerships with community-based organizations and benefits navigators, and seeks to align those services across agencies.

In addition, because of our understanding that workforce fields not named in the current version of SB 1545, such as child care, are critical to economic opportunity in many regions of the state, we are supportive of broadening the economic sectors that are targeted under this bill. We support the amendment (-2) to allow local workforce investment boards to identify the sectors that are most critical and relevant for investment in their region.

Please vote in favor of SB 1545.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Belle Cantor". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a thin horizontal line.

Belle Cantor
Senior Program Officer for Education