HB 4155

Whether you are an individual, school, business, or government entity, you most likely rely on computer systems every day. There is also a rise in cloud services and the proliferation of Internet of Things (IoT), which creates a myriad of security vulnerabilities that didn't exist a few decades ago. Pair this with a large and growing gap in the cybersecurity workforce and a dramatic rise of the number of cybercrime incidents, and we have an urgent problem on our hands. The state of Oregon must act now so that public and private entities alike have a path to be protected and can recover from cyber-attacks. HB 4155 will help with that.

Overview of HB 4155

Creation of the Cybersecurity Center of Excellence: HB 4155 would Establish an Oregon Cybersecurity Center of Excellence (CCOE) as an independent, nonprofit public corporation charged with coordinating, funding and providing cybersecurity workforce development, education, awareness and training for public, private and nonprofit sector organizations, and facilitating cybersecurity-related goods and services to Oregon public bodies with a targeted focus on the unmet needs of regional and local government, special districts, Education Service Districts, K-12 schools and libraries.

Governance: HB 4155 would change the membership, roles, and responsibilities of the current Oregon Cybersecurity Advisory Council (OCAC). The newly reconfigured 15-member council, comprised of a geographically diverse set of representatives from stakeholder organizations, would serve as the governing body for the CCOE moving forward. State experts, local and regional governments, schools, critical infrastructure, and private sector representatives are included in the Council.

Operations: HB 4155 would direct Portland State University, Oregon State University and University of Oregon to jointly operate the CCOE by an operating agreement, provide administrative and staff support and facilities for center operations. It would allow the CCOE to enter into agreements that enable the establishment and ongoing support of CCOE operations and services.

Funding: HB 4155 would authorize the CCOE to accept moneys from the federal government and other sources; and establish several targeted Funds to accomplish its mission: e.g., a cybersecurity operating fund, workforce development fund, grant fund for local entities, and a public awareness fund.

Why we care about HB 4155?

HB 4155 would leverage federal funds. The federal government has made cybersecurity a priority. If Oregon does not act and prepare for these federal funds appropriately, millions of dollars will be left on the table.

HB 4155 would leverage current expertise and invest in it. For example, Portland State University has a National Center of Academic Excellence in Cybersecurity (NCAE-R) designation from the National Security Agency (NSA) and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Each of the universities co-operating the center and many other higher education institutions, including community colleges would bring necessary technical expertise to the CCOE.

HB 4155 would encourage collaboration and partnership. Having an expanded OCAC would bring more people to the table with unique skills, challenges, and perspectives. Together people from different sectors and industries can begin to fully assess and solve Oregon's cybersecurity challenges.

HB 4155 would support local government partners in becoming more secure. Oregon's thousands of local government entities, including special districts, schools, cities and counties, have access to an incredible amount of sensitive information and provide services that are critical to public life. When local governments and their critical services and infrastructure are vulnerable, the public is at risk.

HB 4155 would help increase the cybersecurity workforce. Right now, Oregon has over 5,000 unfilled positions for skilled cybersecurity workers. Our educational system is not graduating enough students to fill this gap. Programs that would be supported by this bill would help garner interest in the cybersecurity field, provide experiential learning opportunities for students, and help to close the gap in our workforce.

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