

SB 523 -1 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Education

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Meeting Dates: 3/2, 3/23

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Repeals requirement that Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC)'s plan for applied baccalaureate degree programs include recommendation as to whether community colleges should be allowed to offer applied baccalaureate degrees. Enacts requirement that HECC plan for applied baccalaureate degree programs include name and type of applied baccalaureate degrees to be conferred, with the stipulation that any applied baccalaureate degree for nursing be conferred as bachelor of science: nursing (BSN). Requires applied baccalaureate degree programs in nursing approved by Higher Education Coordinating Commission under ORS 341.013 to confer degrees as BSN.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Nursing workforce shortage
- Competition with out-of-state and online BSN programs

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-1 Replaces the measure. Defines Bachelor of Science: Nursing degree. Permits community colleges to offer Bachelor of Science: Nursing degree in addition to applied baccalaureate degrees and to apply to Higher Education Coordinating Commission for approval of proposed Bachelor of Science: Nursing degree program.

BACKGROUND:

HECC received authority to approve applications from community colleges to offer [applied baccalaureate programs](#) with the passage of Senate Bill 3 (2019).

House Bill 4003 (2022) made changes to nurse licensure and staffing to address the nursing workforce shortage, and also directed the Oregon Health Care Workforce Committee to study Oregon's nursing workforce and submit recommendations to the Legislative Assembly. The resulting 2022 report, [The Future of Oregon's Nursing Workforce: Analysis and Recommendations](#), includes information on the levels of nursing licensure as well as education and training programs available in the state of Oregon. According to the report, five schools, both public and private, offer a pathway for registered nurses (RNs) with an associate's degree in nursing (ADN) to earn a bachelor of science: nursing (BSN). In addition, 11 community colleges have partnered with Oregon Health and Science University (OHSU) to form the Oregon Consortium of Nursing Education (OCNE), which offers a shared curriculum and provides a pathway for students completing the ADN program at a community college to pursue a BSN at OHSU. Since 2014, Oregon has seen increasing enrollment in BSN programs and declining enrollment in ADN programs. While students earning either an ADN or a BSN are eligible for licensure as a registered nurse (RN), many universities report an increase in employer preference for job candidates with a BSN.

Senate Bill 523 requires applied baccalaureate programs in nursing offered by community colleges to confer degrees as bachelor of science: nursing.