

Submitter: Chris Groener  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Education  
Measure: SB523

March 2, 2023

Chair Dembrow, Vice-Chair Weber, and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today. My name is Chris Groener and am a resident of Oregon City, and a member of the Clackamas College Board of Directors. I am here this afternoon to support Senate Bill 523.

I think sufficient evidence shows, and certainly the testimony given here today tells us, there is a dire need to expand access to BSN programs. I will let that stand on its own. I would like to personalize the situation.

My family, like so many unfortunately, has for the past number of years gotten an intimate look at the health care industry. In our case it was Dad's cancer, and now my mother's health as she recovers from a stroke. In the hours I spent in the hospitals, urgent care facilities, and at their doctor visits I made it a point to ask about the issues they were facing as providers. OK, full disclosure I more than likely was trying to sum up or divert a conversation my father had already begun.

But to a person, they each told me that they were overwhelmed and needed more help. Considering my position, and knowing we have an awarded nursing program at CCC, I would ask what we could do to help. They all advised me that to be hired as a nurse you really (if not in fact) needed a bachelor's degree in Nursing.

If you knew my father, you would not be surprised to know he would then go into the history of community colleges, and particularly the Nursing program. Which they angelically engaged as they tried to take his blood.

But on the ride home I would get the question my father inevitably asked... "what are we going to do about this son?" Well, that is why I am here today.

The community college system in Oregon is and was designed for this exact situation. To step up and nimbly provide for the needs of our communities that might otherwise slip through the cracks. Dad knew that as a founding Board member at CCC, and as a lifelong advocate for ACCESS to education.

Access for everyone, not just those that could afford it, or simply needed help in the translation to a language they are familiar with.

So here we are today. Presented with an opportunity to fulfill a dire need for our communities...for our families. And at the same time expanding access to the education and degrees required for such a massive community need.

To the community that I represent, to my family and certainly to myself...support for Senate Bill 523 is a no-brainer.

Please join me in that support.

Thank you,

Chris Groener,  
Clackamas Community College Board of Directors  
Oregon City, Oregon