

HB 2908 – Testimony, Gregory Price

Greetings Madam Chair Bynum, and committee members,

Gregory Price  
Director, Small Business Development Center  
Oregon Coast and Columbia Gorge Community Colleges  
Lincoln, Wasco, Hood River, Sherman, and Gilliam Counties

I am here today to testify about HB 2908.

Small business has always been at the core of solving our state's biggest problems. Our programs and services are aimed at providing our small businesses with the tools and resources they need to continue to do so.

The ORSBDCN has very strong partnerships nationally, regionally, and locally, both in the public and private sectors. The SBDCs are service hubs and community navigators. Here at OCCC, leveraging those strong partnership, we have created a unique digital media and arts center that will incubate small businesses across the region and provide critical access to training and technology, and help to build new workforce. This support, this model has the opportunity to be scalable to community colleges across the state.

We are working to address childcare issues – our rural communities across the state are severe childcare deserts, and Lincoln County is exceptional poor. Working with our regional Childcare Resource and Referral agency, the county, the college, and other local stakeholders, we are providing a one-of-a-kind business acceleration program – in both English and Spanish – for new and existing childcare providers. In addition to helping them through the demanding licensing and regulatory process, connecting them with financial resources and seed funding, we will be working one-on-one to help them develop healthy and strong business models, so we can have healthy and strong children, both foundational to a sustainable economy. OCCC SBDC is on the leading edge of this local program. This is one of numerous examples of the responsive and innovative programming from the SBDC and an opportunity to expand this impactful and timely programming from local to statewide.

The Oregon SBDC Network serves more small businesses and more rural, underserved and underrepresented, than any other small business technical assistance provider in the state. This puts us in a unique position to deliver services that help address critical workforce, housing, childcare and economic development needs in every corner of our state. We have the strength of both a statewide and nationwide organization, while maintaining the relevancy, responsiveness and adaptability of the local businesses we serve. The business community can play a leading role in solving these problems and the ORSBDCN can provide them with the tools, programming and services to make that happen.

Thank you for your time and consideration.