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To: State of Oregon House Committee on Higher Education

To the committee,

I am writing in support of SB 523 which would allow community colleges to offer Bachelor of Science (BSN) degrees in Nursing.

As the need for Bachelor's prepared registered nurses continues to surge throughout the country, I believe Oregon is right to advance such a commonsense solution and lead the nation in innovative new ways to address this national crisis.

I am a registered nurse, and I live and work in central Oregon. Many of my nurse colleagues here remain associates degree nurses simply due to cost and inconvenience of getting that extra 1-2 years of education from an expensive out-of-area school. Though I'm not aware of the traditional reasons bachelor's degrees are exclusively awarded at 4 year universities, I can come up with no practical reason that satisfactorily equivalent classwork and clinical opportunities can't be offered via community colleges that already have strong working clinical relationships with local hospitals and clinics, and master's prepare faculty in most programs. There is no empirical reason for the exclusivity of this privilege by colleges and universities if community colleges can also offer coursework that meets the accreditation standards for the conferring of baccalaureate degrees.

In my own experience, I completed my bachelor's degree via "distance learning" primarily online through OHSU. This is the primary method of obtaining a BSN degrees for nurses already working as nurses, as necessitated by the rigors of working full time while attending school. This 24 month program cost roughly 6 times that of my entire associates degree. The course and clinical work though challenging, in my experience, were no more strenuous than that of my associates degree that prepared me for my career as a nurse.

Providing this opportunity for RN students in community colleges would be more efficient, significantly less costly and result in a dramatic increase in the availability of bachelor's prepared nurses throughout the state. Assuming accreditation standards can be met I see no reason not to advance this much needed legislation.

Thank you,

Marc Mauch RN, BSN