



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF THE BARBARA ROBERTS CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION INITIATIVE

C-SUITE, Communities UNITED

May 3, 2023

To the Joint Committee on Ways and Means,

The Barbara Roberts Career and Technical Education (BRCTE) Project, “the Project,” serves as a momentous step toward supporting Oregon’s most vulnerable youth and adults- those living in rural Yamhill and Polk counties and our region’s tribal members. The Project is shovel-ready, the property is already purchased by the Sheridan School District, and has been used by the Sheridan Fire Department for training. The Project will develop and implement a new career and technical education (CTE) center and various industry-specific programs and curricula that were selected through data-driven research and surveys. The vision of the Project is to offer hands-on training opportunities, experiential classes, and relevant career programs targeted to increase the supply of high-demand and high-wage industry professionals in the current job market, and future job market.

Multi-sector partners and stakeholders convened to identify and address the community’s economic, educational, and workforce stalemates. The Project aligns with Oregon Health Authority’s single overarching strategic goal: “eliminate health inequities in Oregon by 2030”. Without community-led, data-driven, resident-input, and culturally-appropriate Projects such as the Barbara Roberts Career Technical Education Project, the State will not be able to accomplish their single, overarching goal; eliminating health inequities in Oregon can not be attained without addressing root causes of generational poverty, rural inequities, and all types of disparities.

This Project is unique in its integration with the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde (CTGR). Tribes frequently feel either segregated or tokenized, included to check a box on someone’s application but rarely do projects truly integrate tribal needs. This Project is different. C-Suite CEO and Principal, Carla Munns, is a tribal member herself and understands the value and uniqueness of authentic tribal partnerships. The CTGR is one of the core partners convened for this initiative. Tribal members will be designing curriculum and programs to meet their cultural and industry needs. The CTGR is one of the few members of the “Regional Jobs Accelerator Partnership” that was formalized to advance efforts in the region such as the BRCTE Project.

I urge you to approve funding of \$12 million to support the Oregon Health Authority in their single overarching goal. I hope you approve funding of the BRCTE Project to show rural Oregonians they are heard, valued, and supported in their efforts to improve the lives and wellbeing of their community and its residents. A community-driven solution, especially one as well-developed as this, is rare and exceptionally valuable to hard-to-reach populations.

Respectfully,
Carla Munns