

**Testimony of Zachary Mulholland, Chair, Lane Community College Board of Directors**

Before the Senate Education Committee  
Public Hearing on Senate Bill 478  
February 12, 2025

Chair Frederick, Vice Chair Weber, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Zach Mulholland, and I serve as Chair of the Lane Community College Board of Directors. In addition to my role at LCC, I have spent my career advocating for public policy, community-driven leadership, and environmental justice.

Senate Bill 478 makes significant changes to the governance of Oregon's community colleges, yet no one consulted with us before these changes were proposed. This raises an important question: What problem is this bill trying to solve?

One provision of SB 478 that seems particularly unnecessary is the requirement that community college boards formally approve all state and national memberships the college holds. This mandate serves no clear purpose and represents an inappropriate level of legislative micromanagement.

Community college boards already have the authority to oversee memberships if necessary. However, we have chosen to delegate that responsibility to our one employee—the college president—because we recognize that managing memberships is an operational, not a governance, function. These memberships are critical for institutional collaboration, best practices, and professional development. They include statewide affinity groups—professional networks that bring together staff from different colleges to share expertise and improve institutional effectiveness. These groups exist for professionals in areas such as human resources, marketing and public relations, public safety and facilities management, among others. Additionally, our faculty utilize memberships with external organizations to remain current in their field.

The Legislature has no such mandate for any other locally elected government entity, nor for public university boards or commissions. So why single out community colleges?

Senate Bill 478 imposes top-down mandates on locally elected boards that already have the tools and authority to make these decisions. Instead of imposing rigid new rules, I urge the committee to respect the local control of elected boards and reject this unnecessary legislation.

Thank you for your time, and I am happy to answer any questions.