



House Committee On Labor and Workplace Standards

HB 3181

Wednesday, February 19, 2025

Shane O'Brien, Associate Director of Government and Community Relations, Oregon Tech

Chair Grayber, Vice Chairs Munoz and Elmer, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Shane O'Brien, Associate Director of Government and Community Relations for the Oregon Institute of Technology (Oregon Tech). I appreciate the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of HB 3181, which would establish a Task Force on Youth Apprenticeship to expand career-connected learning opportunities for Oregon students.

Oregon is facing immense workforce shortages in countless sectors and industries, including those most relevant to Oregon Tech, ranging from behavioral health to dental health care to semiconductors. At the same time, many states throughout the nation have looked to youth apprenticeship programs to address similar workforce deficits and to simultaneously extend opportunities for high school students to get a head start on their future careers.

HB 3181 would establish a Task Force on Youth Apprenticeship and direct the Task Force to conduct a comprehensive study of youth apprenticeship programs across the United States, as well as the apprenticeship and youth workforce development policy landscape in Oregon, including the K-12 system and higher education. The Task Force will report on best practices for registered youth apprenticeship programs, different program models and options, and obstacles to deploying a statewide youth apprenticeship framework. The results of this study will help develop a data-driven legislative proposal for the 2027 legislative session.

Oregon Tech supports this task force because a statewide registered youth apprenticeship framework would address rampant workforce shortages, provide students with an income while in school, and offer them firsthand experience in fields of their interest. This opportunity would encourage students to further explore these interests in higher education before successfully transitioning to the workforce upon graduation. At Oregon Tech, we see firsthand the benefits of experiential learning—many of our students arrive with prior dual-credit or workforce training experience, and they thrive in programs that emphasize real-world application. By taking this initial step to develop a strong youth apprenticeship framework, Oregon can start the process of building a program that will equip students with industry-specific skills and create seamless transitions into higher education and in-demand careers.

Thank you,

Shane O'Brien, Associate Director of Government and Community Relations, Oregon Tech

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