

**Representative Susan McLain**  
*House District 29*



February 20, 2025

**RE: Support for House Bill 3181 in the House Committee on Labor and Workplace Standards**

Dear Chair Grayber, Vice Chairs Elmer and Muñoz, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to you as an Educator for over 42 years and as the former chair and current member of the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education to express my strong support for **House Bill 3181**, which will establish the Taskforce on Youth Apprenticeship. HB 3181 outlines a data-driven process that will allow us to create a comprehensive policy for youth apprenticeship programming in Oregon during the 2027 Legislative Session.

Apprenticeship programs are a key element of our Education system in Oregon, and I strongly believe that expanding opportunities for youth apprenticeships will benefit both our students and our economy. We need a seamless Education system that supports all students and helps them reach their dreams. This starts with early learning and includes K-12, apprenticeships, job training, and higher education. Youth apprenticeships expand pathways to opportunity and stability for students just like higher education does. It is essential programming that will decrease barriers and increase opportunities for students in our workforce, especially those who have historically been marginalized.

Since 2010, enrollment in higher education has declined by 11.61 %, in part because of the increasing cost of higher education and the long-term burden of student loan debt. We also have a rapidly changing job market and an immediate need for highly skilled workers. Youth apprenticeships are an excellent way for students to gain valuable knowledge and skills, and the programs can develop and grow as technologies advance and technical requirements evolve. These programs will evolve through strong partnerships between schools and businesses and ensure we have the workforce necessary to have economic security for all communities in Oregon.

Apprenticeships are an example of thinking outside of the standard education system box, being creative, and looking for different ways to improve educational opportunities for every student. They can provide our students with exceptional career prospects that allow them to enjoy the level of economic security that comes with earning a living wage with good benefits.

I appreciate Representative Sosa's leadership and advocacy on this issue. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like to discuss HB 3181 in more detail. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan McLain". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Representative Susan McLain