

Submitter: James Paulson

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Higher Education and Workforce Development

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3669

Dear Chair Hudson and Members of the House Committee On Higher Education and Workforce Development,

I am writing to express my strong support for HB 3669, the Prosperity Programs bill, which builds on the proven success of Prosperity 10,000 (P10K) and ensures Oregonians have the workforce development resources they need to succeed in a rapidly evolving labor market.

The 2023 Future Ready Oregon legislation laid the groundwork for innovative workforce programs that have transformed lives across the state. HB 3669 continues this progress by expanding access to career coaching, scholarships, paid internships, and job training, ensuring that Oregonians—especially those facing systemic barriers—can access the opportunities they need to thrive.

With funding for Future Ready's P10K set to expire this year, we must act now to reinvest in these efficient and effective programs. The data speaks for itself: In Multnomah and Washington counties alone (through January 2025), over 2,200 participants have enrolled, achieving an impressive 94% completion rate, with 78% of previously unemployed participants now employed and earning an average wage of \$23.60 per hour. Statewide, more than 8,600 Oregonians—particularly low-income individuals, veterans, women, BIPOC, and LGBTQ+ residents—have benefited from P10K.

While \$50 million is a significant investment, the long-term benefits far outweigh the cost. For every \$1 invested, Oregon will get \$2.98 back through new tax revenue and reduced dependency on social service programs. Additionally, federal workforce funding is projected to decline by 10% this year, putting additional strain on an already challenged system. With layoffs affecting industries from government to advanced manufacturing, it is more critical than ever to ensure Oregon's public workforce system is well-resourced to support displaced workers and help them transition into new careers.

Shakiba's story is just one example of the program's impact. After immigrating from Afghanistan, she faced language barriers that prevented her from entering her field of dentistry. With support from P10K, she secured a paid internship at WorkSource Beaverton/Hillsboro, where she improved her English skills and gained valuable experience. That opportunity led to a front desk job at Portland Community College,

and now, she is training to become a dental assistant—all while raising a growing family. Stories like hers highlight how investments in workforce development lead to stronger families, communities, and a more resilient Oregon economy.

I urge you to support HB 3669. This bill is more than just a workforce initiative—it is a strategic economic driver that strengthens Oregon's communities and industries alike.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

James Paulson