



Written Testimony in Support of House Bill 3552

Submitted by Chris Holden, CEO, WBTO, LLC

To: Chair Hudson, Vice-Chairs Fragala and Harbick, and Members of the House Committee on Higher Education and Workforce Development

Date: April 4th, 2025

Chair Hudson, Vice-Chairs Fragala and Harbick, and Members of the Committee:

My name is **Chris Holden**, and I serve as the CEO of **WBTO, LLC**, a company committed to strengthening Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs—particularly in the manufacturing sector—through industry-aligned training, technical support, and regional collaboration.

I'm writing to express my **strong support for House Bill 3552**, which would empower Oregon's Education Service Districts (ESDs) to establish **regional career centers**. This legislation represents a smart, forward-thinking strategy to bridge the gap between education and workforce needs, especially in regions where schools and students face barriers to accessing high-quality training opportunities and modern equipment.

At WBTO, we've partnered with ESDs, school districts, and employers throughout the state to conduct **regional needs assessments**, train CTE instructors, and support equipment repair in high school manufacturing labs. From this work, one thing is clear: **CTE programs thrive when education and industry come together around shared goals.**

HB 3552 creates the framework to do just that. By giving ESDs the authority and resources to build and operate regional career centers, the bill encourages localized solutions that are directly responsive to the demands of regional economies. Whether it's advanced manufacturing, healthcare, or emerging technologies, students will benefit from programming that's both relevant and rigorous.

If passed, this legislation would directly support and expand the work WBTO is doing across Oregon. Our team is ready to assist in:

- Conducting data-driven workforce needs assessments;
- Providing hands-on training and mentorship for instructors;
- Supporting the design and delivery of CTE programs aligned with real career opportunities.

I commend this committee and the bill's sponsors for taking meaningful steps to align education with employment. By investing in regional career centers and empowering local leadership, Oregon can build a stronger, more equitable CTE ecosystem.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony and for your commitment to students and the future workforce of our state.

Respectfully,

Chris Holden
CEO, WBTO, LLC

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