

**April 21, 2025**

Senator Janeen Sollman  
Representative Ricki Ruiz  
Co-Chairs of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education

Oregon State Capitol  
900 Court Street  
Salem, OR 97301

**Re: Senate Bill 5525**

Dear Senator Sollman, Representative Ruiz, and members of the Subcommittee on Education,

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for SB 5525, which would appropriate moneys from the General Fund to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission for funding the second biennium of the Oregon Cybersecurity Center of Excellence (OCCoE). As a Senior Network Engineer for Eugene School District 4J, I help lead cybersecurity efforts for a district serving over 16,000 students and 2,000 staff. I recently completed the OCCoE's Professional Certificate in Building Cyber Resilience for public sector organizations, and I cannot overstate its value for professionals like me who are on the front lines of digital resilience in education.

Eugene School District 4J operates with a lean IT team, which means we have to be agile, creative, and continuously learning to defend our infrastructure against evolving threats. Participating in this 12-week program gave me actionable frameworks, tools, and a statewide community of peers to help us build capacity, even when resources are tight. Most importantly, the program emphasized resilience—not just technical controls—which is a critical mindset shift for smaller public agencies that may never have the budget to hire large cybersecurity teams but still have high-stakes responsibilities to protect students, staff, and sensitive data.

Some of the ongoing challenges our district and others face include:

- **Developing mature cybersecurity programs** with limited staff and time
- **Training and retaining skilled personnel** in a highly competitive job market
- **Identifying practical steps to strengthen our incident response** and reduce risk exposure

The OCCoE program addressed these head-on, with real-world use cases, practical assignments, and access to mentors who understand the constraints we work under. I walked away from the experience with a clear roadmap to improve our practices, and I'm already sharing these lessons with colleagues across the state.

I urge you to support SB 5525 and allocate the \$11.3 million requested to OCCoE so that critical educational resources like the Cyber Resilience Certificate Program can continue. Continued funding means more professionals across Oregon—especially in smaller school districts, tribal

governments, and local agencies—can access the training we need to secure our systems and protect our communities.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ben Shapiro', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**Benjamin Shapiro**  
Senior Network Engineer  
Eugene School District 4J