



April 24, 2025

Chair Janeen Sollman

Chair Ricki Ruiz

Members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education

RE: Support for SB 5525 – HECC Higher Education & Workforce Investments

Dear Chair Sollman, Chair Ruiz, and Members of the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education,

On behalf of the Oregon Business Council (OBC), I am writing to express strong support for SB 5525 and the investments it proposes in higher education and workforce development. As a statewide business leadership organization committed to a thriving, inclusive economy, OBC recognizes that strong, aligned postsecondary and workforce development systems are foundational to workforce readiness, economic mobility, and the long-term prosperity of our state.

The strength of Oregon's economy rests on a talented, diverse workforce. Through Future Ready Oregon, the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) has supported a new talent development framework built on deep cross-sector partnerships, innovative programs and training models, and a focus on strengthening and broadening the workforce through support for communities who have been historically underrepresented. This historic investment has been critical in shaping shared leadership across the healthcare, manufacturing, and technology sectors to meet industry talent needs and prepare Oregonians for career opportunities in these fields.

We are supportive of the proposed targeted investments in behavioral health workforce development to help address the urgent need to expand the mental health workforce, as well as funding for pre-apprenticeship programs in construction and housing to meet critical infrastructure and housing needs.

OBC appreciates the commitment of Governor Kotek and the Legislature to prioritize postsecondary and workforce development investments. Your ongoing support will ensure that all Oregonians have the opportunity to succeed in a dynamic and evolving economy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Duncan Wyse', is positioned above the printed name.

Duncan Wyse

President

Oregon Business Council