

April , 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 strong support of 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). Within my current role, I oversee data strategy, data sharing, and building relationships, and the OCCoE Professional Certificate in Building Cyber Resilience Program was a launch pad to furthering my research and training initiatives around cybersecurity practices to get me to this position. I also have a daughter in high school who attended the OCCoE NW Cyber Camps, and that experience solidified her decision to pursue a Cybersecurity degree). The passing of this bill is important to me because while in the many cyber related roles I've held within county, health, education, and state entities, I've seen the need for the type of educational resources that are provided by the OCCoE on many levels.

Funding for OCCoE enables the education of government and tribal employees/leaders to gain a better understanding of the cyber threat landscape of Oregon. It also generates interest among Oregon's youth to explore different career fields while in high school. Without the funding for these resources, we may be taking a step backwards in promoting the organizational cybersecurity posture in the state. Especially within smaller governmental agencies, there is a lack of funding and resources for various cybersecurity needs:

- Developing mature cybersecurity programs
- Workforce development for existing staff
- Hiring new cybersecurity professionals

When working in Klamath County as an IT director, I saw the need for a cybersecurity program, and OCCoE's Professional Certificate in Building Cyber Resilience program provided more education and direction toward developing the more robust cybersecurity posture that was needed. By utilizing the professional certificate program, other members of SLTT's have the ability to bolster their cybersecurity programs and existing workforce like I was able to. OCCoE is also helping meet these critical needs for the future by developing the next generation of leaders in our cybersecurity workforce through NW Cyber Camps. Because of these camps, students like my daughter have the opportunity to garner interest in cybersecurity careers to fill the gaps that I've only seen grow over the years in the field.

I urge you to support SB 5525 to allocate the \$11.3 million requested to OCCoE so that critical educational resources will continue to be available to help Oregon grow a more secure cybersecurity posture, now and into the future, at a time when we need it the most.

Thank you very much for your time.

Respectfully submitted,

Jessica Chastain

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