

May 1, 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 in 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).

As the Outreach Coordinator for the Cybersecurity and Cyber Defense Policy Center at PSU in conjunction with OCCoE, I am in constant discussion with members of our community about the ongoing need for increased cyber resilience in our state. From experts to officials to citizens—everyone is feeling the pressure to keep our communities safe. We all want to see Oregon have the means to keep up with the ever increasing threats, and give our hard-working, passionate public sector employees a fighting chance to protect our infrastructure and our citizens. Without funding for initiatives like those we are working so hard to maintain and expand in OCCoE, it is clear we will never get there.

In my position, I am only beginning to grasp the full depth and breadth of this issue, something the average citizen cannot see. With federal funding cuts destroying so many important programs in Oregon, I can see why deciding what to fund in this moment would be very difficult from the outside. However, losing ground on cybersecurity initiatives will inevitably exacerbate the issues we face, as it leaves public systems vulnerable to more chaos (as we are seeing in the city of Portland) when our communities will need us more than ever with no federal safety net.

In order to keep up with the increasing threats, we need to expand the following initiatives:

- Workforce development for public service
- Affordable Security Operations Center (SOC) services for public entities
- Public outreach and awareness

Two of OCCoE's arguably highest impact programs for addressing these needs are at risk of losing funding: the Professional Certificate in Building Cyber Resilience for government/tribal employees and leaders to increase cyber resilience in public organizations, and GenCyber Cyber Camps for high schoolers to develop interest and experience in pursuing cybersecurity degrees/careers.

OCCoE is also working to expand its low to no-cost SOC services at partnering universities/colleges, which addresses these needs two-fold by providing hands-on cybersecurity training to college students

while serving public entities at affordable rates. However, significantly more resources are necessary to expand these services to meet the ever increasing demand.

Each of these programs are driving forces within OCCoE's cybersecurity workforce development initiatives and their decrease would be a monumental loss in the state's mandate to fulfill this critical need for training professionals and increasing awareness to protect Oregonians from cyber crime.

I urge you to support SB 5525 to allocate the \$11.3 million requested to increase OCCoE's outreach to the state via these highly needed cybersecurity training and education programs for public services.

Thank you very much for your time.

Respectfully submitted,



Tessa Stadel
Tessa Stadel (May 1, 2025 12:48 PDT)

Tessa Stadel
Outreach Coordinator
Cybersecurity & Cyber Defense Policy Center
Portland State University