



April 30, 2025

Co-Chair Janeen Sollman
Co-Chair Ricki Ruiz
Members of Joint Ways and Means Education Subcommittee
Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 9301

Dear Co-Chairs Sollman and Ruiz, and Members of the Committee:

Thank for this opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 5525.

I write to request your support for a \$400,000 allocation to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission for administration of the Oregon National Career Readiness Certification (NCRC) Program for the 2025-27 biennium. Established by ORS 660.343, the Oregon NCRC program provides Oregonians with:

- A set of three assessments that identify examinees' proficiency level in foundational workplace skills including reading, applied mathematics, and graphic literacy;
- Targeted instruction and remedial skills training to remediate those foundational skills in which examinees are not yet proficient, as identified by the assessment process; and
- Issuance of a National Career Readiness Certificate to program participants who demonstrate proficiency in foundational workforce readiness skills.

Over 88,000 Oregonians and 6 million Americans have earned an NCRC. With more than 29,000 employers recognizing and endorsing the credential for employment, the NCRC is the only nationally portable credential backed with decades of ROI research predicting career training and job performance success. Quoting the most recent Higher Education Coordinating Commission NCRC Annual Report:

"The NCRC helps Oregon businesses build and maintain a skilled workforce. In today's hiring market, employers want to be able to quickly identify qualified applicants. The NCRC has proven that it reduces employee turnover. The NCRC has proven that it reduces the cost and time of training new employees."

ACT's research verifies that earning an NCRC increases the earner's wage and employment outcomes, which results in a strengthening of the workforce pipeline for Oregon employers. Additionally, because each state's [NCRC-attainment rate is one of six factors that Site Selection uses in its annual ranking of states](#), investment in Oregonians' opportunity to earn an NCRC is not only an investment into each Oregonian's ability to secure meaningful employment but an investment in the state's ability to attract and retain investment into the state of Oregon by business and industry leaders. While the NCRC is applicable to jobs across the economy, it is worth emphasizing that the NCRC is the only foundational workplace skills credential endorsed by the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM), aligning it with



Oregon's efforts to attract employers such as clean energy, semiconductor and other manufacturers to the state.

Because [the American Council on Education recommends](#) postsecondary institutions to award up to six hours of college credit for NCRC attainment and because institutions like [Clackamas Community College](#) do, in fact, grant college credit based on NCRC level, the NCRC program helps Oregonians earn a foothold into higher education in addition to certifying readiness for workforce.

Once funded at over \$1 million per fiscal year, the Oregon NCRC program is currently without an appropriation for the 2025-2027 biennium, leaving HECC without the funds to administer the program despite the obligation imposed by ORS 660.343.

I appreciate this opportunity to advocate in support of this important program, which creates economic mobility and career opportunity for Oregonians. Please contact me with any questions you have about this request to fund the Oregon NCRC Program.

Respectfully,

Stephanie Chavis Guillory
Senior Director of Government Relations
ACT