



OREGON SENATE DEMOCRATS

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Senate Democrats Pass Future Ready Oregon

Senate Bill 1545 will focus investments on building career pathways, good paying jobs

SALEM – Today, the Senate approved [Senate Bill 1545](#) on a vote of 23 to 3. This legislation makes investments towards building career pathways in targeted sectors, including health care, manufacturing and construction.

“The biggest obstacle we face in our economic recovery is the lack of an adequately trained workforce,” said [Senator Michael Dembrow](#) (D-Portland), the Senate representative on Oregon’s Workforce and Talent Board and Chair of the Senate Committee on Education, who co-carried Senate Bill 1545 on the Senate floor. “We need to get more Oregonians into training programs that will allow them to enter career pathways and progress on those pathways to self-sufficiency and prosperity.”

“The last few years have been an incredible struggle for much of Oregon’s workforce,” said [Senator Kathleen Taylor](#) (D-Portland), Chair of the Senate Committee on Labor and Business, who co-carried Senate Bill 1545 on the Senate floor. “As the COVID-19 pandemic comes to the end, we owe it to Oregonians to ensure that they have access to the education, training, and resources necessary to attain good-paying jobs. This legislation will provide resources for underserved and underrepresented communities to overcome barriers to education and employment and create economic mobility.”

An [Oregon Employment Department survey](#) from the fall of 2021 found that Oregon’s health care providers had more than 27,700 vacancies, a record high. Healthcare workers at all levels are experiencing burnout, mental health challenges and other lasting impacts of being on the frontline of the pandemic.

“Oregon’s health care system is experiencing a workforce crisis,” said [Senator Deb Patterson](#) (D-Salem), Chair of the Senate Committee on Health Care, who spoke in support of Senate Bill 1545 on the Senate floor. “Staffing shortages in health care settings affect quality of care and the ability of health care workers to do their jobs. Senate Bill 1545 will help Oregonians build their careers in health care, improving quality of care for patients and setting Oregonians from disadvantaged backgrounds on the path to rewarding, lifelong careers.”

Senate Bill 1545 creates a number of grant programs aimed at assisting communities of color, women, low-income communities, rural and frontier communities, veterans, persons with disabilities, incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals, members of Oregon's nine federally recognized Indian tribes, and individuals who disproportionately experience discrimination in employment based on their age to obtain jobs in Oregon's construction, health care, and manufacturing sectors.

Senate Bill 1545 now goes to the House of Representatives for consideration.

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