



March 31, 2020

Senator Peter Courtney, President of the Senate
Representative Tina Kotek, Speaker of the House
Representative Paul Holvey Co-Chair, the Interim Special Joint Committee on Coronavirus Response
Senator Arnie Roblan Co-Chair, the Interim Special Joint Committee on Coronavirus Response

Re: Recommendation Related to Interim Special Joint Committee on Coronavirus Response Proposal #27

Dear President Courtney, Speaker Kotek, Co-Chair Representative Holvey and Co-Chair Senator Roblan:

We are writing to thank you for your leadership during these unprecedented times and for your efforts to ensure the health, safety and prosperity of all Oregonians. We applaud the work of the Special Joint Committee on Coronavirus Response and recognize the unbelievable challenge the Committee faced in developing recommendations to respond to the impacts of the novel coronavirus.

As Workforce Development Boards, we were especially appreciative of the focus on ensuring “stability for low-income workers, individuals, and small businesses who are at risk of being significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.” We are on the frontline of supporting low-income, underserved populations and they need and deserve priority attention during this crisis.

To better support your focus on low-income, underrepresented workers (and now job seekers), we believe **Proposal #27** outlined in the March 25, 2020, Special Joint Committee on Coronavirus Response Memo should be modified to use the State’s dislocated worker system administered by the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) to ensure support for workers not covered by unemployment insurance. This system offers an integrated approach that aligns the resources and efforts of the US Department of Labor, Oregon Employment Department, Oregon Department of Human Services and a variety of local resources and programs.

Through this structure, these resources will assist in immediate and short term occupational skills training to either transition workers into similar fields (non-urgent healthcare workers into critical care/emergency occupations) as well as training into occupations or industries that still have need for workers as we emerge from this crisis (healthcare, warehousing, manufacturing, trades, maritime/ports, transportation, agriculture etc). This includes utilizing virtual and alternative methods for training delivery and certification in order to be most responsive to shifting economic needs and continued or returning social distancing norms. In addition to training, the system deploys individual supportive services payments (wage subsidies, rent/mortgage, childcare, healthcare, utilities, wifi/phone etc),



tracks all participants and outcomes in accordance with Federal and State requirements, and reports to State and local partners.

We believe using this existing system is the best way to reach and serve low-income workers and ensure the highest and best use of Federal, State and local resources.

Your time, consideration and service are much appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Heather Ficht".

Heather Ficht, OWP Chair person

