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QuickPoint! – Oregon Can Help Young Oregonians Be “Future Ready” by Reducing Red Tape

By Kathryn Hickok

Governor Kate Brown opened this month’s legislative session with her [State of the State speech February 5](#). She focused on the need for better education and workforce training for young Oregonians, so they can achieve the American Dream and raise families. To close the “skills gap” between workers and employment opportunities, she proposed [a new job-training initiative](#) called “Future Ready Oregon.”

The governor’s vision is laudable, but what young Oregonians need most isn’t another state program. What often stands between young workers and moderate-income jobs is government red tape in the form of burdensome occupational licensing requirements and fees that can be significant barriers to entry.

According to the Institute for Justice, “[l]icensing laws now guard entry into hundreds of occupations, including jobs that offer upward mobility to those of modest means....” In fact, [Oregon ranks 8th in the nation](#) in the number and expense of regulatory burdens and restricts numerous occupations licensed in few other states, such as farm labor contractors, bartenders, and locksmiths.

Oregon could make it easier for job-seekers by reducing license and fee requirements for jobs that have little or no impact on public safety and by replacing some occupational licenses with less restrictive credentialing options. Reducing government red tape that stands between Oregonians and the jobs and training they need to climb the economic ladder would truly help young adults become “future ready.”

Kathryn Hickok is Publications Director and Director of the Children’s Scholarship Fund-Oregon program at Cascade Policy Institute, Oregon’s free market public policy research organization.