

# Senate Education Committee

*Trevor Currier 271-4151*

**SB 531-FN**, establishing a task force to study the feasibility of the creation of cosmetology related programming in Coos County.

**Hearing Date:** January 20, 2026

**Time Opened:** 9:47 a.m.

**Time Closed:** 10:13 a.m.

**Members of the Committee Present:** Senators Ward, Sullivan, Abbas, Prentiss and Altschiller

**Members of the Committee Absent :** None

**Bill Analysis:** This bill establishes a task force to report on the feasibility of creating a cosmetology program within the Berlin Regional Career & Technical Center and New Hampshire community college system.

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**Sponsors:**

Sen. Watters

Sen. Pearl

Sen. Rosenwald

Sen. Avarad

Sen. Prentiss

Sen. Carson

Sen. Rochefort

Rep. Korzen

Rep. Cornell

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**Who supports the bill:** Senator David Watters, Senator Cindy Rosenwald, Senator Howard Pearl, Annette Cole (WMCC), Kristine Dudley (CCSNH)

**Who opposes the bill:** No one

**Who is neutral on the bill:** Danielle Demers (BMHS)

**Summary of testimony presented in support:**

**Senator David Watters**

- Sen. Watters introduced and testified in support of Senate Bill 531-FN.
- Sen. Watters established that the bill creates a task force to investigate the feasibility of creating a cosmetology program in northern New Hampshire. The task force is to include local representatives, a representative of the Chancellor of the Community College System, and a cosmetology teacher from a CTE program.
- Sen. Watters stated that a cosmetology program in the north country is needed because the northernmost program is currently in Laconia.

- Sen. Watters stated that these types of programs tend to serve as economic drivers.
- Sen. Watters stated that this could serve as an opportunity to better integrate the community college programs and the CTE centers and, therefore, requires a task force model because of the involvement of the community college system.
- Sen. Watters mentioned that he considered the Berlin area because of the proximity of the White Mountain Community College Campus, Berlin High School, and the CTE Center. He also noted that, as an example, the heavy trucking model is already established there.
- Sen. Watters described several other areas around the state where he believes this partnership could flourish.
- Sen. Watters explained that the second part of the bill authorizes the Commissioner of the Department of Education to designate high schools, public academies, and community college campuses offering career and technical education as CTE Centers. He stated that this change will broaden the opportunities for CTE education and address challenges identified by the Capital Budget Committee.
- Sen. Watters discussed testimony received from Dover CTE cosmetology students.
- Sen. Watters emphasized the need for legislation to advance this idea and highlighted the marine biology program established in Wolfeboro as an example.
- Senator Ward asked whether a task force is being created due to an established need or if it's just an idea for developing a program. Senator Watters responded that he believes it originated from both an idea and an established need, specifically the region's existing employment needs.

**Annette Cole, White Mountain Community College, Director of Workforce Development**

- Ms. Cole testified in support of Senate Bill 531-FN.
- She clarified that her role is to develop short-term training programs to meet the immediate workforce needs in the region. She explained that this training aims to give students job-ready skills, a livable wage, economic mobility, and a clear pathway. She cited an example of an LNA, where the student now has a start toward becoming a medical assistant, LPN, or RN.
- She stated that she envisions the pathway for the cosmetology program as a business management degree or massage therapy.
- She established that there are no cosmetology schools north of the Notch or within seventy-five miles outside the Berlin-Gorham area.
- She stated that the challenge she anticipates is that the White Mountain Workforce Development Program alone may not be enough to create a

sustainable program. Additionally, she expressed concerns about staffing, funding, housing, and the program's physical space.

- She envisioned CTE students using the center during the day and adult learners in the evenings and on weekends.

### **Christine Dudley, Community College System, Director of Workforce Development**

- Ms. Dudley testified in support of Senate Bill 531-FN.
- She stated that the community college system will participate in the process so they can offer input on future partnerships and address barriers such as funding, physical space, travel, and a sustainability plan.
- She stated the establishment of a program like this at the community college system level would likely begin with a short-term workforce program. She established that the short-term workforce programs are non-credit, but students can often enter the workforce with a license or credential. She envisioned a pathway from the high school program into this program.
- She established that there are many areas in which the community college system collaborates with CTE programs. She also stated there are examples of areas where the community college system co-locates programs.

**Summary of testimony presented in opposition:** None

### **Neutral Information Presented:**

#### **Danielle Demers, CTE Director in Berlin, NH**

- Ms. Demers stated there is an existing two-year process to implement new CTE programs.
- She expressed concern that this bill may remove local authority in decision-making and questioned the local need for a cosmetology program.
- She expressed concern that removing CTE centers to off-site locations could allow for profit organization to take away from the CTE program.
- Senator Abbas inquired if there has been any discussion about creating a cosmetology program through CTE. Ms. Demers replied that there has been no discussion regarding establishing such a program through CTE.