



Legislative Testimony

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

May 11, 2021

The Honorable Teresa Alonso Leon, Chair
House Committee on Education

Subject: Senate Bill 234A

Chair Alonso Leon and members of the committee, my name is Nathaline Frener, and I serve as Assistant Director of the Correctional Services Division for the Oregon Department of Corrections (DOC). I am providing testimony on Senate Bill (SB) 234A.

What the Bill Does:

SB 234A directs the Higher Education Coordinating Commission to convene a workgroup of stakeholders to study and make recommendations to the Legislature on ways to best serve adults in custody (AICs) recently eligible to receive federal student grants.

Background:

DOC recognizes education as one of the most effective means of reducing recidivism. First Chemeketa Community College, and more recently Treasure Valley Community College, were awarded the opportunity to open post-secondary education programs funded through Pell grants to AIC students in DOC facilities. DOC has been working with these community colleges to develop eligibility lists and provide opportunities for AICs to enroll in their post-secondary programs.

Impacts:

Soon, these opportunities will no longer be restricted to the facilities served by the Chemeketa and Treasure Valley Community Colleges. Changes to Pell grant eligibility requirements will enable AICs statewide to once again be eligible to apply for federal student grants to pay for and pursue post-secondary education opportunities while incarcerated.

This bill would direct the Higher Education Coordinating Commission to convene a workgroup to make recommendations for a unified, coordinated, and consistently applied statewide system for AICs' participation in post-secondary education opportunities funded through federal student grants such as Pell grants. Identifying best practices and developing a single process for all stakeholders would assist the educational institutions and DOC in understanding expectations, roles, and responsibilities, as well as help ensure AICs are awarded the same opportunities across the state. DOC believes this would facilitate and support these AIC education opportunities.

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Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Submitted by:

Oregon Department of Corrections

Nathaline Frener, Assistant Director for Correctional Services

Nathaline.J.Frener@doc.state.or.us