

REVENUE: No revenue impact

FISCAL: Minimal fiscal impact, no statement issued

Action: Do Pass as Amended and Be Printed Engrossed

Vote: 5 - 0 - 0

Yeas: Beyer, Edwards C., Girod, Thatcher, Riley

Nays: 0

Exc.: 0

Prepared By: Patrick Brennan, Administrator

Meeting Dates: 2/27, 3/20

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Directs the Oregon Volunteers Commission for Voluntary Action and Service to adopt recommended best practices to assist organizations and entities in screening volunteers. Stipulates that special attention be given to developing best practices related to volunteers who are to have unsupervised access to children and vulnerable persons. Requires the commission to establish and maintain an outreach program to advise organizations and entities on volunteer screening and criminal background checks.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Approaches used in other states to screen volunteers
- Types and examples of organizations to which the measure applies
- Potential for creating liability for organizations not adopting best practices

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT: Clarifies that choosing not to adhere to best practices and recommendations developed by the commission does not create a basis for liability on the part of the organization.

BACKGROUND: The Oregon Volunteers Commission for Voluntary Action and Service, also known as Oregon Volunteers, was formed in 1994 and is comprised of 25 members appointed by the Governor. The commission is nonpartisan and is charged with promoting and supporting volunteerism and civic involvement in Oregon. Oregon Volunteers has been part of the Department of Housing and Community Services since 2001, having previously been part of the Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development.

Existing laws and administrative rules govern the use of background checks and screening for case workers and full-time employees; however, Oregon currently lacks a legal framework to instruct organizations on screening volunteers. While there are currently guidelines for organizations that administer programs for the Department of Human Services, and rules are pending for school districts, there are numerous other organizations that serve youth and vulnerable populations that have no guidance and information on how to screen volunteers.

Senate Bill 61-A directs Oregon Volunteers to identify best practices for volunteer screening. The measure does not require the adoption of these practices and would not mandate the use of background checks or screening, but would instead provide information to organizations seeking to voluntarily implement such programs. The measure also clarifies that groups that do not follow the adopted best practices do not create a basis for liability.

3/26/2007 2:15:00 PM

This summary has not been adopted or officially endorsed by action of the committee.
Committee Services Form – 2007 Regular Session