

REVENUE: No revenue impact

FISCAL: Minimal fiscal impact, no statement issued

Action: Do Pass the A-Engrossed Measure

Vote: 4 - 0 - 1

Yeas: Boquist, Ferrioli, Metsger, Devlin

Nays: -

Exc.: Burdick

Prepared By: Erin Seiler, Administrator

Meeting Dates: 6/12

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Requires school districts with public high schools to adopt plans to encourage students to register to vote and to vote in elections. Requires State Board of Education to incorporate voter registration skills into Essential Learning Skills. Declares an emergency; effective July 1, 2009.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Definition of voter registration as essential skill
- Trend of less civic engagement among students
- Importance of establishing voting as a habit at a young age

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT: No amendment.

BACKGROUND: Students who are involved in the electoral process and receive improved civic education, particularly at a young age, are more likely to become politically engaged and lifelong voters. The Legislative Assembly has adopted multiple initiatives to improve civic education and voter participation among students and new voters in Oregon. In 2007, the Legislative Assembly passed Senate Bill 951, directing community colleges and state institutions of higher education to adopt plans to encourage students to register to vote and to vote in elections and passed House Bill 2910 to allow those 17 years of age to register to vote at any time as long as they are 18 at the time of an election.

House Bill 2584 (2007) established the Task Force on Civics and Financial Education that studied and made recommendations about how to increase and improve civics and financial education in kindergarten through grade 12 public schools. The Task Force reported to the 2007-2008 Interim House Committee on Education with evidence that voting practices and civic organization participation rates of youth show a trend of less civic engagement by young people and by the citizenry generally.

House Bill 3473A expands on previous legislative efforts to improve civic education and participation among students.