

REVENUE: No revenue impact

FISCAL: Minimal fiscal impact, no statement issued

Action: Do Pass
Vote: 5 - 3 - 0
Yeas: Edwards C., Gelser, Nolan, Read, Roblan
Nays: Berger, Garrard, Jenson
Exc.: 0
Prepared By: Theresa Van Winkle, Administrator
Meeting Dates: 6/11, 6/12

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Prohibits adverse employment action against employee for declining to participate in employer-sponsored meeting or communication about religious or political matters. Creates employee civil cause of action. Requires employer to post notice of employee rights. Provides exceptions for religious or political organizations, and for legally required or voluntary meetings or communications. Clarifies that bill would not prohibit mandatory meetings of the employer's executives or administrative personnel to discuss issues, including those subjects covered by the bill.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Examples of captive meetings
- Legality of the measure
- Whether the measure applies to meetings regarding charitable activities
- Impact on employees and employers
- Applicability to the Legislative branch

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT: No amendment.

BACKGROUND: Although current laws protect employees from certain forms of discrimination, no law protects employees from being required by their employer to attend religious or political meetings, including meetings concerning union organization, or to be disciplined for refusing to do so.

SB 519-A outlines specific employee and employer rights related to participating in employer-sponsored meetings or communications regarding religious or political matters. The measure exempts religious organizations by allowing the requirement of attendance or participation for the primary purpose of communicating the employer's beliefs, practices, or tenets; and also allows political organizations, which include political parties and other organizations that substantially engage in political activities, to require employees to attend or participate in communications regarding their political tenets or purposes.

The measure maintains current statute regarding restrictions on political activities by public employees (ORS 260.432).