

FISCAL IMPACT OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION

Measure: HB 2221

Seventy-Sixth Oregon Legislative Assembly – 2011 Regular Session
Legislative Fiscal Office

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Measure Description:

Establishes higher education scholarship program to reward foreign language proficiency and encourage continued improvement in foreign language proficiency.

Government Unit(s) Affected:

Oregon Student Assistance Commission (OSAC)

Summary of Expenditure Impact: See Analysis

Local Government Mandate:

This bill does not affect local governments' service levels or shared revenues sufficient to trigger Section 15, Article XI of the Oregon Constitution.

Analysis:

The measure establishes a scholarship program within the Oregon Student Assistance Commission (OSAC) to award up to \$2,000 in a year for qualified students to the extent funds are available. The measure stipulates the qualifications for students to receive the award and establishes a maximum scholarship amount for a person of \$8,000 over four years. The measure directs the Commission to establish rules for award priority when limited funds are available, set standards for eligible students to qualify for the awards and establish an assessment method that complies with certain proficiency guidelines.

The measure establishes the Oregon Roadmap to Language Excellence Fund, separate and distinct from the General Fund, continuously appropriates moneys in the fund to OSAC, and credits the interest earned back to the fund.

The fiscal impact is indeterminate. The source and the amount of funds to be awarded are not identified in the measure. The Commission will utilize existing staff to establish rules for the scholarship program and wait until a source and amount of funds are determined before implementing the program.

Once funding has been identified, in order to implement the scholarship program, the Commission would allocate the anticipated workload to three existing positions for the administration of the program including, start-up system development, review of transcripts to determine eligibility, and defining and monitoring continuing eligibility. The Commission would establish an advisory committee of experts to review new and continuing applications for language proficiency to fulfill the measure's assessment requirements for proficiency guidelines.

The Legislative Fiscal Office notes that the demand of the individual grants to be awarded are indeterminate and that excessive demand may require additional staff to administer the program. Depending on the cumulative workload requirements added this session or possible budget reductions, the legislature may need to review staffing requirements in the future should this legislation pass.