

STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY**Senate Committee On Human Services and Early Childhood****Fiscal:** Fiscal impact issued**Revenue:** No Revenue Impact**Action Date:** 03/26/15**Action:** Do Pass With Amendments And Requesting Referral To Ways And Means.
(Printed A-Engrossed.)**Meeting Dates:** 03/26**Vote:**

Yeas: 5 - Dembrow, Gelser, Kruse, Monnes Anderson, Olsen

Prepared By: Cheyenne Ross, Committee Administrator

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Centralizes administration of Oregon Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Services Program (Program) in Office for Deaf, Deaf-Blind and Hard of Hearing Services (Office) within Department of Human Services (DHS). Requires DHS appoint Program manager with specified qualifications. Requires DHS appoint advisory committee to be supported by Office. Specifies membership and functions of advisory committee. Requires DHS seek out all funding sources to support Office. Sets forth Office duties and functions. Requires Office prepare needs assessment, every two to five years and report to DHS, Governor, and Legislature. Specifies content of needs assessment. Requires establishment of system to track agencies' compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Absence of centralized programs and services
- Need for data from needs assessment
- Distinguishing between various groups within larger population
- Tailoring services to meet unique sets of needs
- Funding
- Individuals only feeling "disabled" when services are not available
- Access is denied when services are not available
- Importance of staff having experience with deaf culture and issues

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT:

Adds definition of "deaf-blind." Removes requirement for main and satellite offices for Oregon Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Services Program (Program). Removes requirement that Program manager appoint specific staff for main office. Modifies composition of advisory committee. Replaces requirement that Department of Human Services (DHS) appoint specific administrative assistant for advisory committee with Office for Deaf, Deaf-Blind and Hard of Hearing Services (Office) to provide support. Modifies Office duties and functions. Replaces twice-yearly assessment and reporting requirement with every two to five year assessment and reporting requirement. . Requires establishment of system to track agency compliance with ADA.

BACKGROUND:

Oregon is among only a dozen states that do not provide centralized assistive services to deaf, deaf-blind, and hard of hearing persons. In order to obtain access, in order to participate, in order to succeed and thrive, this community depends upon centralized interpretive, outreach, referral, advocacy and technical assistance services.

Senate Bill 449-A establishes the Office for Deaf, Deaf-Blind and Hard of Hearing Services within the Department of Human Services to administer services and programs for deaf, deaf-blind, and hard of hearing Oregonians.