

Seventy-Eighth Oregon Legislative Assembly - 2015 Regular Session
STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY
Senate Committee On Education

MEASURE: SB 493
CARRIER: Sen. Bates

Fiscal: Has minimal fiscal impact

Revenue: No Revenue Impact

Action Date: 04/17/15

Action: Do Pass.

Meeting Dates: 04/14, 04/17

Vote:

Yeas: 5 - Beyer, Gelser, Knopp, Kruse, Roblan

Exc: 2 - Baertschiger Jr, Hass

Prepared By: Gretchen Engbring, Committee Administrator

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Removes ability of Governor to disband university governing board or force university to take other action if university fails to make timely compliance with conditions established when State Board of Higher Education endorsed governing board. Requires university that fails to comply with conditions to have governing board vote on whether to disband or retain governing board. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Challenges of keeping board members engaged if governor can dissolve board
- Need for independent, self-sustaining board
- Different standards for rural universities and Willamette Valley universities
- Uncertainty created by Governor's ability to dissolve board
- Other checks and balances for governing boards beyond Governor's power to dissolve board or force other action

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Under current law (section 168a, chapter 768, Oregon Laws 2013, as amended by section 1, chapter 83, Oregon Laws 2014, and section 10, chapter 113, Oregon Laws 2014), the Governor may suspend a university governing board and direct the university's administration to report to the governing board of a different university, direct the university to adopt a different governance structure, or decide that the university should retain its governing board. Absent legislative action, the Governor's action is final; unless the Governor decides to retain the governing board of the university, the governing board is disbanded at the conclusion of the next regular session of the Legislative Assembly.

Senate Bill 493 proposes to amend current statute to remove the Governor's ability to disband a university governing board or require other action by the governing board, and instead requires that the governing board meet and vote on whether the university should retain or disband the governing board.