

STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Workforce

Fiscal: No Fiscal Impact

Revenue: No Revenue Impact

Action Date: 05/04/15

Action: Do Pass The A-Eng Bill.

Meeting Dates: 04/29, 05/04

Vote:

Yeas: 5 - Dembrow, Gelser, Knopp, Rosenbaum, Thatcher

Prepared By: Matthew Germer, Committee Administrator

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Extends to January 2, 2026, the exemption allowing retired members of Public Employees Retirement System to be employed full time by public employer as nursing instructor or trainer for Department of Public Safety Standards and Training without loss of retirement benefits.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Shortage of nurses and public safety trainers in the state
- Importance of nursing instructors and public safety trainers

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Oregon's Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) enables public employers to provide their employees with retirement benefits. State government, public schools, community colleges, and many local governments (cities, counties, and special districts) participate in PERS. There are approximately 900 public employers currently participating in PERS, covering about 95 percent of all public employees in Oregon.

If a retiree wishes to re-enter the workforce, their PERS benefit could be affected based on the plan they retired under, who their employer is, and how many hours they work per year. Any retiree who works for a private sector or non-PERS covered employer may work unlimited hours without any impact on their level of retirement benefit. In general, a Tier One or Tier Two retired member working for a participating public employer can continue to receive retirement benefits as long as the period or periods of employment with one or more participating public employers do not total 1,040 hours or more in a calendar year. Retirement benefit payments will cease for a retiree under the Oregon Public Service Retirement Plan (OPSRP) if they are employed in a qualifying position by a participating employer or work a total of more than 600 hours in a calendar year for one or more participating employers.

In response to a shortage of workers, Senate Bill 342 was enacted in 2007 to temporarily exempt retired Tier One and Tier Two registered nurses working for a public employer as a nursing instructor and trainers at the Department of Public Safety Standards and Training from the limits on how much work can be performed for a public employer before incurring a loss in retirement benefits. The exemption expires on January 2, 2016. House Bill 2684-A extends the sunset date to January 2, 2026, thus allowing these two specific groups of workers to continue working an unlimited number of hours for a public employer without a loss of retirement benefits.