

STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: No Revenue Impact

Action Date: 06/30/15

Action: Do Pass The B-Eng Bill.

Meeting Dates: 06/30

Vote:

Senate

Yeas: 9 - Burdick, Devlin, Hansell, Johnson, Monroe, Roblan, Shields, Steiner Hayward, Winters

Nays: 3 - Girod, Thomsen, Whitsett

House

Yeas: 11 - Buckley, Gomberg, Huffman, Komp, McLane, Nathanson, Rayfield, Read, Smith, Whisnant, Williamson

Nays: 1 - Whitsett

Prepared By: Laurie Byerly, Budget Analyst

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Modifies Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Need to improve outcomes for families and children
- Secretary of State's TANF audit
- Fiscal impact

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, or TANF, is a cash assistance program administered by the Department of Human Services (DHS) for families with children living in deep poverty. To qualify for TANF, families must be at or below 37 percent of the federal poverty level and must have very few assets. TANF provides parents the tools to be job ready and supports stability for children. Parents/caregivers receive a small cash grant for living expenses, transportation and child care to enhance their job search efforts, plus job readiness training. The program is designed to provide interventions for families both "Pre-TANF" and "Post-TANF" to ensure they are prepared to meet program requirements in advance, and have the supports they need to transition into employment when they exit the program. The current maximum monthly benefit for a family of three is \$506. Public assistance caseloads in Oregon are slowly and steadily declining, but are not projected to reach pre-recession levels for several years due to the uneven economic recovery.

House Bill 3535 supports DHS using savings from declining caseloads to "reinvest" in improvements to Oregon's TANF program by making changes at all stages, such as: raising the income maximum for families exiting the program; providing small grants to families as they exit; reducing child care subsidies for three months as parents transition to employment; clarifying eligibility; expanding contracts with community-based organizations to prevent entry into the program in the first instance; improving the program's ability to be customized; providing outcome-focused case management; and aligning state time limits with federal time limits.