

**PRELIMINARY STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY**

**Senate Committee On Education**

**Fiscal:** Fiscal impact issued

**Revenue:** No Revenue Impact

---

**Action Date:**

**Action:**

**Meeting Dates:** 02/03

**Prepared By:** Richard Donovan, Committee Administrator

---

**WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:**

Directs Higher Education Coordinating Commission to conduct evaluation on providing tuition waiver for students at community colleges and public universities who are pursuing mathematics-related degrees. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

**ISSUES DISCUSSED:**

- Desire to turn Oregon into a "Mecca" for math
- Desire to improve student debt situation
- Demonstrated value of math majors
- Measure as a study, in line with previous study bills

**EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT:**

No amendment.

**BACKGROUND:**

Tuition prices have reportedly increased 58 percent at public community colleges and 72 percent at public four-year institutions nationally over the last decade (see College Board's *Trends in College Pricing*). States are increasingly exploring the affordability of postsecondary education institutions and enacting laws to provide increased access to affordable opportunities. Two prominent examples include Senate Bill 81 (2015), the "Oregon Promise," and Tennessee's "Promise Scholarship" program (HB 2491). Both bills allow qualifying residents to attend community colleges with their tuition waived.

Senate Bill 1540 would direct the Higher Education Coordinating Commission to conduct evaluation on providing tuition waiver for students at community colleges and public universities who are pursuing mathematics-related degrees, and would require a report to the Legislature no later than January 15, 2017.