

Fiscal: Has minimal fiscal impact

Revenue: No Revenue Impact

Action Date: 02/08/16

Action: Do Pass With Amendments. (Printed A-Eng.)

Meeting Dates: 02/03, 02/08

Vote:

Yeas: 7 - Baertschiger Jr, Beyer, Gelser, Hass, Knopp, Kruse, Roblan

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. Clarifies that Higher Education Coordinating Commission may consider multiple methodologies for increasing number of math majors in Oregon. 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:

Clarifies that Higher Education Coordinating Commission may consider multiple methodologies for increasing number of math majors in Oregon.

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 and enacting laws to provide increased access to affordable opportunities. Two prominent examples are 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-A directs the Higher Education Coordinating Commission to conduct evaluation on providing tuition waivers for students at community colleges and public universities who are pursuing mathematics-related degrees, and requires a report to the Legislature no later than January 15, 2017.