

STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Workforce and General Government

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: No Revenue Impact

Action Date: 02/09/16

Action: Do Pass And Refer To Ways And Means By Prior Reference.

Meeting Dates: 02/09

Vote:

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

Prepared By: Jan Nordlund, Committee Administrator

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Appropriates \$9 million from General Fund to support Oregon Employer Workforce Training Program, youth work experience programs, and grants for Oregon Community Stewardship Corps and Summer Conservation Corps. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Federal funding for youth work experience programs
- Skills needed for blue collar jobs
- Value of adding work experience component to career and technical education (CTE) programs
- Future labor shortages anticipated as baby boomers retire
- Lack of work experience opportunities is problem in rural and urban areas

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

One of the primary factors businesses considered when looking to locate or expand operations is the availability of a skilled, educated workforce. For the last two decades, youth and young adults have not been entering the labor force at the rates that were seen previously. The Oregon Employment Department attributes the decline to two primary factors: a growing number of adults are working in the jobs traditionally held by youth and young adults, and the increased emphasis on school and college. Without opportunities to gain work experience, youth and young adults are not able to build the soft skills that are important for school and employment. Work experience also puts young adults who have families to support on an early path to self-sufficiency. Supporters of youth programs also observed that youth who have work experience are more likely to graduate and less likely to be involved with the Oregon Youth Authority.

Senate Bill 1526 appropriates funding to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission for the Office of Community Colleges and Workforce Development to support youth work experience programs.