

STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Higher Education, Innovation, and Workforce Development

Fiscal: Has minimal fiscal impact

Revenue: No Revenue Impact

Action Date: 02/19/16

Action: Do Pass The A-Eng Bill.

Meeting Dates: 02/19

Vote:

Yeas: 5 - Gallegos, McKeown, Read, Reardon, Whisnant

Exc: 4 - Hayden, Hoyle, Johnson, Nearman

Prepared By: Victoria Cox, Committee Administrator

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Directs Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) to evaluate waiving tuition for students at community colleges and public universities who are pursuing mathematics-related degrees. Clarifies that HECC may consider multiple methodologies for increasing number of math majors in Oregon. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Other countries' higher production of math majors forces Oregon high tech companies to recruit internationally
- Past success of HECC in evaluating similar proposals
- Need to improve K-12 math performance
- Shortage of math teachers due to ability of math majors to earn more in other endeavors

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 means to improve access to affordable postsecondary education. Two prominent examples are Senate Bill 81 (2015), the "Oregon Promise," and Tennessee's "Promise Scholarship" program. Both programs provide tuition waivers for qualifying residents to attend community college.

Senate Bill 1540-A directs the Higher Education Coordinating Commission to evaluate the possibility of providing tuition waivers for students at community colleges and public universities who are pursuing mathematics-related degrees and report to the Legislature no later than January 15, 2017.