

SB 396 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Education

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Sub-Referral To: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Meeting Dates: 3/23

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Requires the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) to establish foster youth success centers in each public university. Requires success centers to develop and implement peer support programs for Foster Youth Promise students, provide outreach and mentoring to advise foster youth high school students about their educational options, and develop additional support programs to promote the success of foster youth in higher education. Foster Youth Promise students are defined as those students enrolled in community college or public universities that are entitled to tuition waivers under ORS 350.300. States that issuance of lottery bonds to finance the higher education of foster youth are an appropriate use of state lottery funds. Authorizes the State Treasurer to issue lottery bonds for the biennium beginning July 1, 2017 to provide funding for the higher education expenses of foster youth. Establishes the Foster Youth Success Center Fund in the State Treasury. Continuously appropriates those funds to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission to pay the costs incurred to fund foster youth success centers and pay bond-related costs. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

REVENUE: May have revenue impact, but no statement yet issued

FISCAL: May have fiscal impact, but no statement yet issued

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

BACKGROUND:

During Fiscal Year 2015, a total of 11,238 children spent time in Oregon's foster care system. Of the children leaving foster care, 56.1 percent were reunited with their families, while that percentage dropped to 39.5 percent for teens exiting foster care. There were a total of 878 children aged 18 or over served in Oregon's foster care system, and 231 current and former foster care youth received scholarships for higher education for the 2015-16 school year through federal grants.

In Oregon, a tuition waiver is available for foster youth and former foster youth. The waiver applies to tuition and fees remaining after funds from the Pell Grant, the Oregon Opportunity Grant, and institutional aid have been applied. The waiver is only available to students who spent at least one year in the foster care system between the ages of 16 and 21. Recipients are required to perform 30 hours of community service each year.