

SB 551 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Education

Prepared By: Lisa Gezelter, LPRO Analyst

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 a pilot program to assist Foster Youth Promise students transitioning from community college to a public university. Requires the pilot program to be implemented in each community college and public university that has existing support programs for Foster Youth Promise students. Requires the pilot program to develop and implement additional support programs for foster youth. Establishes program requirements. Requires HECC to analyze existing support programs and coordinate alignment of those programs between community colleges and public universities. Requires HECC to coordinate private fundraising efforts. Requires HECC to report to the legislative committees related to higher education annually during each off five consecutive regular sessions beginning in 2018. Authorizes the use of state lottery funds. Authorizes the State Treasurer the issue lottery bonds for the biennium beginning July 1, 2017. Establishes the Foster Youth Promise Support Program Fund for disbursement to HECC for the purpose of assisting Foster Youth Promise students transitioning from community colleges to public universities as part of the pilot program. 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.