

**SB 298 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY**

**Senate Committee On Judiciary**

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**Prepared By:** Josh Nasbe, Counsel

**Meeting Dates:** 3/29

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**WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:**

Makes permanent provision granting Commissioner of Bureau of Labor and Industries discretion to seek civil penalties or appear in court on housing discrimination claims. 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:**

No amendment.

**BACKGROUND:**

ORS 659A.820 to 659A.890 authorize the Commissioner of the Bureau of Labor and Industries to investigate and remedy housing discrimination. Prior to 2015, when the Bureau determined that there was substantial evidence to support a housing discrimination complaint, the Bureau was required to seek civil penalties if it was unable to settle the complaint. Similarly, the law required the Bureau to pursue a discrimination-related matter in court if either party elected to seek judicial remedies. In 2015, the Legislative Assembly granted the Commissioner discretion, for a two-year period, to seek civil penalties or appear in court in these circumstances. Senate Bill 298 makes this change permanent. The 2015 legislation also required the Commissioner to submit a report comparing the resolution of these claims both before and after the legislation.