

SB 395 -1 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Education

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Sub-Referral To: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Meeting Dates: 3/23, 4/11

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Requires the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) in cooperation with the state's public institutions of higher education, to determine annually the number of current and former foster children enrolled in the institutions and the graduation rate for current and former foster children. Requires HECC to make those rates available to the public and to use those rates when conducting annual evaluations of each public university.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Needs of foster youth in higher education
- Success rates
- Need for additional data

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-1 Removes reference to Oregon Health and Science University and inserts Department of Human Services.

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.