

HB 2965 -1 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Higher Education and Workforce Development

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Meeting Dates: 3/30, 4/13

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Establishes Task Force on Workforce Development for People with Disabilities. Establishes task force membership. Requires task force to 1) review Council of State Governments and National Conference of State Legislatures report entitled "Work Matters: A Framework for States on Workforce Development for People with Disabilities," 2) evaluate Oregon's programs related to employing people with disabilities for adequacy, outcomes and financial effectiveness, 3) report findings and make recommendations to legislative committees responsible for workforce development and 4) meet as soon as practicable to develop legislative concepts for 2018 and 2019 regular sessions of the Legislative Assembly. Requires Oregon Disabilities Commission to provide staff support to task force and directs all state agencies to assist task force as needed. Creates sunset on December 31, 2020. 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:

-1 Deletes emergency clause. Replaces Oregon Disabilities Commission appointment of five members to task force with Director of Human Services appointment of five members, including one representative from the Oregon Resource Association. Replaces Oregon Disabilities Commission with Department of Human Services for provision of staff support to the task force.

BACKGROUND:

The jointly published Council of State Governments (CSG) and National Conference on State Legislatures (NCSL) 2016 report entitled "Work Matters: A Framework for States on Workforce Development for People with Disabilities," offers a policy framework and initiatives that aim to increase employment and reduce poverty for citizens with disabilities. The report's thematic policy goals include 1) encouraging states to be model employers of people with disabilities, build capacity of private- and nonprofit-sector employers to engage in disability inclusion efforts, have an external and internal focus on disability awareness, and to implement policies that optimize resources and services through interagency coordination, collaboration and blending of funding, and implementation of robust performance measures, 2) preparing individuals with disabilities for the work force, including education and career readiness, skill development and job exploration opportunities, and continuous meaningful family engagement, 3) supporting individuals with disabilities as they navigate the logistics of getting to work, including accessibility in transportation, technology and the built environment, 4) increasing retention of people with disabilities in the workplace by supporting workers experiencing disability and adjusting to changes in disability, and 5) supporting self-employment and entrepreneurship strategies by strengthening the viability of self-employment and entrepreneurship and including disability-owned businesses in state procurement, certification and financial support policies.

Currently, there are 350,586 working age individuals with disabilities living in Oregon, and 35.7 percent are employed. In comparison, 72 percent of working age Oregonians without disabilities are employed. The Department of Human Services's Vocation Rehabilitation program and the Oregon Commission for the Blind are the two primary

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state agencies that are charged with assisting Oregonians with disabilities to achieve, maintain and advance in employment and independence. The Vocational Rehabilitation program serves 16,000 disabled individuals per year with a capped grant, and placed more than 2,000 into jobs in 2016. The program works with both consumers and employers to facilitate job placement. The Oregon Commission for the Blind (OCB) provides specialized vocational rehabilitation training services to Oregonians who are blind and need to maintain employment or return to work. The agency also works with businesses to attract, hire and retain workers who are blind.