

SB 85 -1 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Business and Labor

Prepared By: Jan Nordlund, LPRO Analyst

Meeting Dates: 4/26, 5/17

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Modifies the membership of the Telecommunication Devices Access Program Advisory Committee.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-1 Requires one position to be filled by person who is visually impaired or deaf-blind.

- No expenditure or revenue impacts

BACKGROUND:

The Oregon Public Utility Commission (PUC) is the state's regulatory body for investor-owned utilities, including telephone utilities. The Commission's Residential Service Protection Fund (RSPF) section oversees three programs that assist customers with telecommunications services: the Oregon Telephone Assistance Program reduces monthly telecommunications bills for qualifying Oregonians; the Oregon Telecommunications Relay Service allows persons with hearing and/or speech disabilities to place and receive phone calls; and the Telecommunication Devices Access Program (TDAP) provides adaptive equipment to Oregonians with hearing, vision, speech, mobility or cognitive impairments.

As part of its TDAP program, the Commission administers the TDAP Advisory Committee, which includes members who are deaf, hard of hearing, are speech impaired, are professionals in the field of speech impairment, and representatives of telephone companies that provide, or are interested in providing, telecommunication devices access relay services. The advisory committee, which sunsets in 2020, is comprised of 12 members. The PUC indicates that it is difficult to fill vacancies on the advisory committee and that there is a desire to add representation for persons with vision impairments.

Senate Bill 85 modifies the membership of the Telecommunications Devices Access Program Advisory Committee as follows: by reducing the number of consumers from nine to five and adding a visually-impaired member; specifying that the professional member may be in the field of visual impairment; and removing the PUC member.

Senate vote: 28-0