

SB 93 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Prepared By: Meg Bushman-Reinhold, Fiscal Analyst

Meeting Dates: 5/31, 6/16

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Increases maximum amount of civil penalties recovered for violations of occupational health and safety standards that may be credited to Workers' Memorial Scholarship Account from \$250,000 to \$1 million.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Purpose and administration of Workers' Memorial Scholarship Account
- Potential to increase balance of fund with portion of Oregon OSHA civil penalties
- Whether scholarships are available for vocational training
- Availability of the principal of the Workers' Memorial Scholarship Account for other purposes, such as OR-OSHA operations
- Timing of increased balance in the Account

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

The Oregon Occupational Safety and Health Administration (Oregon OSHA) Workers' Memorial Scholarship Account was established by the Legislative Assembly in 1991 to help finance higher education for students, GED recipients, and recent graduates who are dependents or spouses of workers killed or permanently disabled by on-the-job injuries. Recipients of the annual award are selected by Oregon OSHA's Safe Employment Education and Training Advisory Committee, comprised of representatives from business, organized labor, and government. Applicants must be Oregon residents and enrolled full-time in an undergraduate or graduate program.

The scholarship is funded by the interest earned on a portion of civil penalties issued against employers for workplace safety violations. Private donations to the fund can also be accepted, but are not solicited by Oregon OSHA. The portion set aside in the Workers' Memorial Scholarship Account is currently capped at \$250,000, which has not increased since 1993. In the past seven years, Oregon OSHA has allocated, on average, five scholarships per year averaging \$1,200.

SB 93 increases the maximum amount set aside to fund the Workers' Memorial Scholarship Account to \$1,000,000, allowing for increased scholarship award amounts. SB 93 does not modify civil penalties for workplace safety violations.