

SB 1018 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Human Services

Action Date: 04/10/17

Action: Do pass with amendments. Refer to Ways and Means by prior reference. (Printed A-Eng).

Vote: 5-0-0-0

Yeas: 5 - Dembrow, Gelser, Knopp, Monnes Anderson, Olsen

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: No revenue impact

Prepared By: Matt Doumit, LPRO Analyst

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Establishes Oregon Deaf, Deaf-Blind, and Hard of Hearing Program (Program) within Department of Human Services (DHS). Establishes Oregon Deaf, Deaf-Blind, and Hard of Hearing Committee (Committee) to advise DHS on Program. Specifies components of Program and membership of Committee. Becomes operative January 1, 2018. Takes effect 91st day following *sine die*.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Budget concerns and possible amendments
- Balance of representation on committee
- Expanding access to deaf and hard of hearing services; comparison to other states
- Differing service needs and access to individual rights
- Services for deaf and hard of hearing individuals with additional disabilities

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

Modifies membership of Oregon Deaf, Deaf-Blind, and Hard of Hearing Committee to advise DHS. Establishes Oregon Deaf, Deaf-Blind, and Hard of Hearing Program administered by DHS in consultation with Committee. Specifies components and mandates of Program. Requires DHS to contract with certified sign language interpreters in consultation with Committee. Modifies definitions and requires DHS to define terms by rule.

BACKGROUND:

The Oregon Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program currently exists in the Department of Human Services (DHS). It offers technical assistance to make agency programs accessible to hearing disabled people, to advise policy makers, and to promote information about the needs of hearing disabled people and available programs. It serves a primarily advisory role.

Senate Bill 1018-A replaces the Oregon Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program with the Oregon Deaf, Deaf-Blind, and Hard of Hearing Program (Program), and establishes the Oregon Deaf, Deaf-Blind, and Hard of Hearing Committee (Committee) to advise DHS on the implementation and administration of the Program.

Senate Bill 1018-A permits the Program to: collect relevant data and act as a public information source; conduct studies on issues relating to people with hearing disabilities; submit reports and recommendations to the Governor's Office and Legislative Assembly; advocate for people with hearing disabilities; maintain a sign language interpreter referral service; assist in making state programs accessible; and implement a long-term plan for providing essential services to people with hearing disabilities. The measure requires the State Board of Education to consult with the Committee on rules setting standards for interpreters in schools, and directs DHS to consult the Committee on entering contracts with certified sign language interpreters.