

## HB 2965 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

### House Committee On Higher Education and Workforce Development

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**Action Date:** 04/13/17

**Action:** Do pass with amendments and be referred to Ways and Means. (Printed A-Eng.)

**Vote:** 8-0-1-0

**Yeas:** 8 - Alonso Leon, Bynum, Heard, Johnson, Reardon, Reschke, Sollman, Whisnant

**Exc:** 1 - Clem

**Fiscal:** Fiscal impact issued

**Revenue:** No revenue impact

**Prepared By:** Laura Kentnesse, LPRO Analyst

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#### WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Establishes Task Force on Workforce Development for People with Disabilities (Task Force). Requires President of Senate, Senate Minority Leader, Speaker of House of Representatives and House Minority Leader to each appoint one Task Force member. Requires Director of Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS) appoint five members, including one representative from Oregon Resource Association. Requires Task Force review Council of State Governments (CSG) and National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) report titled 'Work Matters: A Framework for States on Workforce Development for People with Disabilities,' evaluate Oregon's programs related to employing people with disabilities for adequacy, outcomes and financial effectiveness and develop legislative concepts for consideration during 2018 and 2019 legislative sessions. Requires DHS provide staff support to Task Force. Sunsets Task Force on December 31, 2020.

#### ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Comprehensiveness of CSG and NCSL report, which offers more than one hundred policy options for consideration by task force
- Highlights of other states' actions to address workforce development for people with disabilities
- Recognition that some policy options would have fiscal implications, while others would not impact state budget
- Disability, like race and gender, is natural, normal part of human experience that should not diminish person's right to fully participate in society

#### EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

Requires DHS, rather than Oregon Disabilities Commission, appoint five members and provide staff support for Task Force. Deletes emergency clause.

#### BACKGROUND:

In 2016, the Council of State Governments and National Conference on State Legislatures published a joint report titled "Work Matters: A Framework for States on Workforce Development for People with Disabilities." The report offers a policy framework that aims 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-sector 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, 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

This Summary has not been adopted or officially endorsed by action of the committee.

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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 Oregon Department of Human Services Vocation Rehabilitation (VR) program and the Oregon Commission for the Blind (OCB) are the two primary state agencies responsible for assisting Oregonians with disabilities to achieve, maintain and advance in employment and independence. The VR program serves 16,000 disabled individuals per year; placing more than 2,000 individuals into jobs in 2016. It works with both consumers and employers to facilitate job placement. The OCB provides specialized vocational rehabilitation training services to Oregonians who are blind and need to maintain employment or return to work. In addition, the OCB works with businesses to attract, hire and retain workers who are blind.