

SB 395 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Carrier: Rep. Reschke

House Committee On Higher Education and Workforce Development

Action Date: 05/23/17

Action: Do Pass the A-Eng bill.

Vote: 8-0-1-0

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

Exc: 1 - Heard

Fiscal: Has minimal fiscal impact

Revenue: No revenue impact

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WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Requires Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC), in cooperation with Department of Human Services and public postsecondary institutions, to determine annually number of current and former foster children enrolled at institutions and graduation rate for current and former foster children. Requires HECC to make the findings available to the public and to use findings when conducting annual evaluations of each public university.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Importance of increasing postsecondary completion rates for former foster youth
- Challenges and barriers in college faced by former foster youth and benefit from support services
- The ability of institutions to identify students that are former foster youth

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

During Fiscal Year 2015, a total of 11,238 children spent time in Oregon's foster care system. Of the children leaving foster care, 56.1 percent were reunited with their families, while that percentage dropped to 39.5 percent for teens exiting foster care. There were a total of 878 youth aged 18 years old or over served in Oregon's foster care system, and 231 current and former foster care youth received scholarships for higher education for the 2015-16 school year through federal grants.

In Oregon, a tuition waiver is available for foster youth and former foster youth. The waiver applies to tuition and fees remaining after funds from the Pell Grant, the Oregon Opportunity Grant, and institutional aid have been applied. The waiver is only available to students who spent at least one year in the foster care system between the ages of 16 and 21 years old. Recipients are required to perform 30 hours of community service each year.