

HCR 24 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Rules

Action Date: 06/28/17

Action: Do adopt the A-Eng measure. Requesting referral to Ways and Means.

Vote: 5-0-0-0

Yeas: 5 - Beyer, Boquist, Burdick, Ferrioli, Roblan

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: No revenue impact

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WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Permits President of the Senate and Speaker of the House to authorize, by rule, all committees of the legislature to accept remote testimony via videoconferencing. Directs Legislative Administrator and director of Legislative Policy and Research Office to develop protocols as specified and post instructions on legislative website. Suspends implementation until Legislative Administrator reports adequate technology and infrastructure are in place to implement.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Increasing participation in legislative process
- Improving access for people with disabilities, seniors, and people who live in rural areas
- Implementation of videoconferencing

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

The legislative committee process of public meetings provides legislators with opportunities to hear from many people who support or oppose proposed legislation, and provides citizens with opportunities for active participation in the lawmaking process. The most common forms of citizen participation are: the submission of written testimony to a committee regarding a measure or issue (which is distributed to legislators and posted publicly on the Oregon Legislative Information System); and attending public hearings at the Oregon State Capitol in-person, to sign-up and speak directly to a committee. On a case-by-case basis, when travel to Salem is not practicable, a committee may receive testimony by telephone or videoconference. These cases are usually limited to circumstances such as required appearances for executive appointment hearings, state budget or redistricting issues.

House Concurrent Resolution 24-A permits the President of the Senate and Speaker of the House to authorize, by rule, all committees of the legislature to accept remote testimony via videoconferencing. Enabling video testimony for all legislative committees will require assessing current resources; identifying and acquiring adequate technology and infrastructure; identifying and securing remote locations with trained staff where people can go to connect and testify; and developing protocols for the public to inform committees in advance so they are prepared to receive and record such testimony. The resolution suspends implementation until the Legislative Administrator reports to the co-chairs of the Legislative Administration Committee that these preparatory steps have been satisfied.