

HB 4014 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Human Services

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Meeting Dates: 2/20, 2/22

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Exempts students receiving the college foster youth tuition waiver from requirement to complete 30 hours of volunteer service. Applies to tuition waivers granted for the 2019-2020 and subsequent academic years.

Fiscal Impact: Has minimal fiscal impact.

Revenue Impact: No revenue impact.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

House Bill 3471 was passed in 2011, which provides waivers of tuition and fees at public institutions of higher education for students with personal experience in Oregon's foster care system. To qualify, students must be under 25 years of age, enrolled as an undergraduate student, have submitted the Free Application for Federal Student Aid for the academic year, and have completed a minimum of 30 volunteer service hours in the previous academic year. According to the Department of Human Services (DHS), 229 youth in foster care received scholarships for the 2015-2016 academic year and 203 youth in foster care received scholarships for the 2016-2017 academic year. According to the Higher Education Coordination Commission (HECC), 47 students received the tuition waiver for the 2015-2016 academic year and 51 students received the tuition waiver for the 2016-2017 academic year.

Twenty-eight states offer some type of tuition assistance program for youth with experience in foster care and, of them, twenty offer tuition waivers; Oregon and Missouri are the only states with a requirement to complete volunteer service hours. The intent of the requirement of 30 volunteer service hours was for students receiving the waiver to mentor other students and youth with personal experiences in the foster care system. According to DHS and HECC, tracking and validating student volunteer service hours has been inconsistent across institutions, and the requirement has created barriers for students to access financial assistance for higher education. House Bill 4014 would remove the requirement that students with foster care experience must complete volunteer service hours to qualify for a tuition waiver at public community colleges and universities.

House vote: 58 - 0 - 2 - 0