

SB 357 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Judiciary

Action Date: 02/18/19

Action: Do pass with amendments and requesting referral to Ways and Means. (Printed A-Engrossed.)

Vote: 6-0-1-0

Yeas: 6 - Bentz, Gelser, Linthicum, Manning Jr, Prozanski, Thatcher

Exc: 1 - Fagan

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: Revenue impact issued

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Meeting Dates: 2/18

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Requires State Court Administrator to distribute funds to the Oregon State Bar on a quarterly basis. Instructs State Court Administrator on timing and manner of calculating future distributions. Directs Oregon State Bar to include methods of evaluations on legal services providers and support efforts to improve public access to the court system. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Increase in funding to be used for hiring additional attorneys
- Unmet need for indigent civil legal services
- Support of the Judicial Department's effort to improve public access to, and information about, the court system
- Methods of evaluation derived from current standards and guidelines being followed by legal aid service providers

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

Clarifies timing and manner of calculating future distributions. Conforms cost of living increase with Oregon Judicial Department's use of Consumer Price Index for all Urban Consumers, West Region.

BACKGROUND:

ORS 9.572 established the Legal Services Program through the Oregon State Bar. Funding received under the program must be used to provide legal services without charge to low-income individuals. The funds may also be used for expenses incurred by the Oregon State Bar in the administration of the program. Each biennium the State Court Administrator distributes a fixed funding amount to the Oregon State Bar in eight quarterly installments of equal amounts. This fixed amount was last adjusted in 2011.

Senate Bill 357 A provides details on the timing and manner of distributions. Additionally, the measure requires the State Court Administrator to adjust the amount to be distributed to the Oregon State Bar in accordance with any percentage increase in the cost of living for the previous year, based on changes in the Consumer Price Index for all Urban Consumers, West Region.