

SB 159 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Education

Action Date: 04/03/19

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

Vote: 4-0-1-0

Yeas: 4 - Gelser, Hass, Thomsen, Wagner

Exc: 1 - Heard

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: Revenue impact issued

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Meeting Dates: 3/13, 4/3

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Requires Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) to convene a group of higher-education stakeholders to facilitate the establishment of the foster youth success centers. Defines Foster Youth Promise Student as a student enrolled in an Oregon community college or public university who is entitled to a waiver of all tuition and fees. Establishes Foster Youth Success Center Fund. Permits use of lottery funds for establishment of centers. Allocates funds from the Administrative Services Economic Development Fund to the Foster Youth Success Center Fund. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Low foster youth attendance rate
- Success of peer support
- Issues with transferring from community colleges to universities
- How universities that already have centers for foster youth ease the transition

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

Requires HECC to convene a group of higher-education stakeholders to facilitate the establishment of the foster youth success centers. Removes provisions related to issuance of lottery bonds. Allocates funds from the Administrative Services Economic Development Fund to the Foster Youth Success Center Fund.

BACKGROUND:

House Bill 3471 (2011) provided current and former foster youth under the age of 25 with a tuition and fee waiver. This waiver applies to all Oregon public 2- or 4-year higher education institutions. Eligibility requirements include spending at least 180 days in the system before the age of 16. Additionally, recipients must perform 30 hours of community service annually. During the 2016-2017 school year, 51 Oregon foster youth used the waiver. Of the 51, 8 attended community colleges and 43 attended public universities. The tuition waiver is currently only awarded to students whose financial needs are not fully met through other funding programs. HECC does not track foster youth enrollment; however, as of the 2018-2019 academic year, 192 Oregon foster youth participated in the federal John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program, Educational and Training Vouchers Program for Youths Aging Out of Foster Care, which awards up to \$5,000 per academic year. Of the 192 students, 170 attended public in-state institutions.

In 2018, 11,645 children in Oregon spent at least 1 day in the foster care system. Through the year, an average of 7,831 children are in foster care daily, and 830 children in foster care are over the age of 18. The Department of Human Services (DHS) reports that 2,313 youth ages 13-17 were in foster care at some time during 2017. The Oregon Department of Education reports a 35 percent high-school graduation rate for foster youth.