

SB 75 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Carrier: Sen. Gorsek

Senate Committee On Education

Action Date: 02/22/21

Action: Do pass.

Vote: 5-0-0-0

Yeas: 5 - Dembrow, Gelser, Gorsek, Robinson, Thomsen

Fiscal: No fiscal impact

Revenue: No revenue impact

Prepared By: Matt Perreault, LPRO Analyst

Meeting Dates: 2/8, 2/22

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Allows Higher Education Coordinating Commission to pay for scholarships for qualifying children of public safety officers using funds from Oregon Opportunity Grant program. Requires Higher Education Coordinating Commission to deplete funds from civil forfeiture accounts set aside for scholarship program before disbursing funds from Oregon Opportunity Grant program for this purpose. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Variability of civil forfeiture funds
- Projected shortfall of funds for scholarship program for children of public safety officers
- Number of students served by scholarship program

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Since 1973, the State of Oregon has offered scholarships to the children of public safety officers who are killed or become disabled in the line of duty. Oregon law requires the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC), which administers the scholarship program, to give priority to children eligible under this program, along with former foster children. This scholarship program is funded by assets acquired through civil forfeiture.

The Oregon Opportunity Grant (OOG) program is Oregon's largest state-funded, need-based financial aid program. According to the HECC, the OOG provides financial support to more than 30,000 low-income college students in Oregon each year. The OOG is primarily funded by appropriations from the Legislative Assembly to the Oregon Opportunity Grant Fund and by donations.

Senate Bill 75 allows the Higher Education Coordinating Commission to pay for scholarships for children of public safety officers using funds from the Oregon Opportunity Grant program. It requires the HECC to deplete funds in accounts set aside for the scholarship program raised from civil forfeiture before accessing funds from the Oregon Opportunity Grant program.