

HB 2349 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Education

Action Date: 03/18/21

Action: Do pass and be referred to Ways and Means by prior reference

Vote: 10-0-0-0

Yeas: 10 - Alonso Leon, Hudson, Neron, Owens, Reardon, Ruiz, Smith DB, Sollman, Weber, Wright

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: No revenue impact

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Meeting Dates: 3/11, 3/18

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Requires tuition and fees at public institutions of higher education to be waived for former foster child who is adopted. Defines adopted former foster child. Applies provisions to 2021-2022 academic year. Provides that tuition and fees may be waived if former foster child was adopted on or after January 1, 2012. Provides that institutions are not required to reimburse tuition and fees previously paid by adopted former foster child. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Whether cost of higher education poses disincentive for adoption
- Possible fiscal impact of legislation
- Number of adopted foster children affected by retroactive provision
- Educational options available to children who age out of foster system

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

The legislature first created a tuition waiver for current and former foster children under House Bill 3471 (2011). Oregon law currently allows for children who are currently or were formerly in foster care to have tuition and fees waived at public universities, community colleges, and Oregon Health and Science University for the equivalent of four years of undergraduate education. This is a last dollar waiver, as it provides that any state or federal student aid, such as the Oregon Opportunity Grant or a scholarship from a college or university, be applied first before the waiver is issued for the remainder of tuition and fees. Chafee Education and Training Grant vouchers are exempt from this provision.

While Oregon law currently offers tuition waivers for current and former foster children, there is no provision in statute that specifically clarifies whether former foster children who are adopted qualify for the waiver. House Bill 2349 would include foster children who were adopted on or after January 1, 2012 to the list of foster children who are eligible for a tuition and fee waiver from public universities and community colleges, beginning with the 2021-2022 academic year, and specifies that any tuition or fees previously paid to a college or university are not required to be reimbursed.