

HB 2954 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Carrier: Sen. Steiner Hayward,
Sen. Riley, Sen. Dembrow

Senate Committee On Education

Action Date: 05/26/21
Action: Do pass with amendments. (Printed A-Eng.)
Vote: 3-2-0-0
Yeas: 3 - Dembrow, Gelser, Gorsek
Nays: 2 - Robinson, Thomsen
Fiscal: Has minimal fiscal impact
Revenue: No revenue impact
Prepared By: Lisa Gezelter, LPRO Analyst
Meeting Dates: 5/12, 5/26

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Allows public charter schools to implement weighted lottery that favors historically underserved students, defined as students at risk because of race, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, disability, income level, proficiency in the English language, socioeconomic status, gender identity or geographic location. Modifies priority admission requirements. Allows priority admission for historically underserved students. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Charter school enrollment statistics
- Benefits to charter schools and students of implementing weighted lotteries

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

Resolves conflicts with House Bill 3041. Prohibits charter schools from limiting enrollment based on gender identity. Adds gender identity to list of historically underserved categories.

BACKGROUND:

Charter schools were first enacted in Oregon with passage of Senate Bill 100 in 1999. Charter schools operate under agreements with local school boards that allow them a measure of independence from certain state and district policies. Charter schools receive public funding, calculated as a percentage of the weighted average daily membership (ADMw) of their sponsoring districts. According to the Oregon Department of Education, 38,430 students attended 133 charter schools in Oregon during the 2019-2020 school year. Twenty of those schools are fully or primarily virtual. Of the total number of students attending charter schools in 2019-2020, 75 percent were white and 45 percent qualified for free and reduced price lunches. Senate Bill 100 (1999) allowed for an equitable lottery selection process.

House Bill 2954 A modifies that provision to allow charter schools to implement a weighted lottery selection process.