SUMMARY

Prescribes requirements for Oregon Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Program.

A BILL FOR AN ACT

Relating to the Oregon Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Program; amending ORS 410.740.

Be It Enacted by the People of the State of Oregon:

SECTION 1. ORS 410.740 is amended to read:

410.740. (1) The Oregon Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Program is created in the Department of Human Services. The purpose of the program is to assist members of the public and state agencies in making agency programs available and accessible to individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.

(2) The program may also provide the following:

(a) Identify the needs and concerns of individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing as their needs and concerns relate to the full achievement of economic, social, legal and political equity.

(b) Advise the Department of Human Services, the Governor, the Legislative Assembly and appropriate state agency administrators on how state services for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing might be improved or better coordinated to meet the needs of these individuals.

(c) Provide information to individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing about where they may obtain assistance in rehabilitation and employment and about laws prohibiting discrimination in employment as a result of disability.

(d) Cooperate with and provide assistance to interest groups concerned with the rehabilitation and employment of individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing and encourage public and private employers to undertake affirmative action to ensure equitable employment of individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.

(e) Promote a continuous program of information and education to employers and the general public to increase awareness of and sensitivity to the needs of individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing for equitable education and training that will ensure for these individuals their full vocational potential.

(f) Encourage public and private employers to take affirmative steps to ensure that individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing have equal ac-
cess to employment, and maintain an ongoing program for placement of individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing in suitable employment.

(g) Partner with the Employment Department to study ways to reduce unemployment and underemployment of individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.

(h) Partner with the Department of Education, universities and colleges and private educational institutions in this state to promote educational programs designed to increase the number of qualified interpreters, captioners and providers of assistive listening systems and other accommodation services.

(i) Develop and recommend uniform statewide standards and procedures for the qualification and certification of persons who provide communication or accommodation services to individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.

(j) Study and report to the Department of Human Services on the development of assistive technology for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing and promote the use of assistive technology as appropriate.

(k) Arrange communication assistance to facilitate interactions with state and local agencies to individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing with language deprivation or other disabilities.

(L) Advocate with individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing in accessing the services described in paragraph (a) of this subsection.

(m) Make recommendations to the department to forward statutory changes to the Legislative Assembly to improve:

(A) Access for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to the services described in paragraph (a) of this subsection;

(B) The accessibility of public buildings for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing; and

(C) Access to qualified providers of accommodation services for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.

(3)(a) The Director of Human Services shall appoint an advisory committee to advise the director regarding the program. The director shall consult with the advisory committee regarding the services described in this section.

(b) The director or the director's designee shall appoint to the advisory committee 12 individuals who have experience in issues that affect individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.

(c) A majority of the members of the advisory committee shall be deaf or hard of hearing, including, to the greatest extent practicable, members who are deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind and who have a hearing loss and another disability.

(4) The Department of Human Services shall consult with the advisory committee on prioritizing services based on available funding.

(5) The Department of Human Services may adopt rules to carry out the provisions of this section.