

HB 2611 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Prepared By: Kim To, Budget Analyst

Meeting Dates: 6/1, 6/7

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Requires that dental and vision benefits be included in health care benefits available to part-time faculty members at public institutions of higher education. Set eligibility for part-time faculty health benefits as eligibility for membership in Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) or other state retirement plan. Requires public institutions of higher education to notify all part-time faculty members of eligibility requirements, available health care benefits and associated costs, and instructions to apply. Requires Higher Education Coordinating Commission agency request budget to include sufficient amount to provide health care benefits to part-time faculty members. Applies requirements to health care benefits offered to part-time faculty members starting 2023-2024 academic year. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Fiscal impact
- Part-Time Faculty Insurance Fund

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Starting with the passage of House Bill 2557 (2009), part-time faculty at institutions of higher education were eligible for health care benefits if they were also eligible for membership in the Public Employees Retirement System (PERS). Senate Bill 551 (2021) modified part-time faculty's access to employer-provided health care benefits, in part by changing eligibility for health benefits from PERS or other retirement plan membership to working at least half of the full-time equivalent at a given institution. Senate Bill 1522 (2022) allowed the calculation of eligibility to use an average of full-time equivalence across institutions.

Under ORS 238.005, a public employee qualifies for PERS membership if they work 600 or more hours for public employers in a given year. ORS 238.074, which governs the Public Employees Retirement System (PERS), and ORS 238A.142, which governs the Oregon Public Service Retirement Plan (OPSRP), currently treat part-time faculty at community colleges who are employed 0.375 full-time equivalent (FTE) for 12 months or 0.50 FTE for 9 months as having worked 600 hours for the purposes of eligibility.

House Bill 2611 A includes dental and vision benefits in health care benefits available to part-time faculty at public institutions of higher education, makes eligibility for health care benefits dependent on eligibility for the Public Employees Retirement System (PERS), and requires colleges and universities to notify public employees of health care benefits and eligibility requirements.