

SB 270 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Carrier: Sen. Dembrow

Senate Committee On Education**Action Date:** 04/04/23**Action:** Do pass with amendments. (Printed A-Eng.)**Vote:** 6-1-0-0**Yeas:** 6 - Anderson, Dembrow, Frederick, Gelser Blouin, President Wagner, Weber**Nays:** 1 - Robinson**Fiscal:** Has minimal fiscal impact**Revenue:** No revenue impact**Prepared By:** Ellen O'Brien, LPRO Analyst**Meeting Dates:** 3/28, 4/4**WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:**

Permits Department of Corrections (DOC) to enter into agreements to offer academic programs to adults in custody (AICs), including at community colleges outside boundaries of community college district in which facility is located. Requires programs to be consistent with administrative rules adopted by DOC and federal regulations relating to Pell Grant.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Impact of education on formerly incarcerated students

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

Replaces the measure.

BACKGROUND:

In response to the 2020 reinstatement of Pell Grant eligibility for adults in custody (AICs), Senate Bill 234 (2021) required the Higher Education Coordinating Commission to convene a stakeholder group on postsecondary education for AICs. The resulting report, [SB 234 Workgroup: Postsecondary Education for Adults in Custody](#), includes background information on the federal expansion of Pell Grant eligibility to AICs, beginning with the Second Chance Pell Program in 2015. All AICs who are enrolled in approved programs will have access to Pell Grants starting July 1, 2023.

The Senate Bill 234 workgroup report also provides a list of postsecondary education and training opportunities offered at DOC facilities as of 2021. At that time, two community colleges – Chemeketa Community College and Treasure Valley Community College – offered Pell Grant-eligible Associate of Arts Oregon Transfer Degrees to adults in custody at three facilities, none of which housed women. The report identified seven additional postsecondary academic programs offered at correctional facilities by Oregon universities and colleges that may be Pell Grant-eligible after July 1, 2023.

In current rule, the DOC requires that “collegiate programs” be approved by the institution education staff and paid for by the inmate (OAR 291-113-0010, OAR 291-113-0015). The education unit at an institution may assist inmates with program activities such as proctoring tests, callouts for viewing videos, or listening to cassette tapes; however, this assistance is dependent on available resources and may differ from facility to facility (OAR 291-113-0015). Pursuit of a postsecondary education is currently limited in OAR 291-113-0015 to “classes provided at the facility or by the local community college or through correspondence courses.”

Senate Bill 270 A permits adults in custody to apply for and enroll in postsecondary academic programs, regardless of location, provided they adhere to the administrative rules and regulations of the Oregon Department of Corrections.