

SB 233 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Rules

Action Date: 05/04/23

Action: Do pass and requesting referral to Ways and Means.

Vote: 4-0-1-0

Yeas: 4 - Knopp, Lieber, Manning Jr, Steiner

Exc: 1 - Hansell

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: No revenue impact

Prepared By: Leslie Porter, LPRO Analyst

Meeting Dates: 4/27, 5/4

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Increases base annual salaries for judges serving in Oregon circuit courts, the Court of Appeals, the Supreme Court, and Tax Court. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- The difficulty of retaining and recruiting judges, due to current salaries
- The history of increases in judicial compensation
- How Oregon's judicial salaries compare nationwide

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Current statute (ORS 292.406, 292.411, 292.416 and 292.426) establishes the annual salaries of judges of the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeals, circuit courts and the Oregon Tax Court. ORS 292.428 specifies that those annual salaries are adjusted by the same percentage amount of any cost-of-living adjustment granted to management service employees in the executive branch. As of July 2021, the salary of Oregon judges ranked 50th out of the 50 States and Washington, D.C. when cost of living was factored in. Salaries for Oregon judges are also approximately 5 percent to 10 percent below the mean and median salaries of judges in all states and U.S. territories, when cost of living is not considered.

Senate Bill 233 increases the salaries of judges in Oregon's circuit courts, Court of Appeals, Supreme Court, and Tax Court in statute, and allows for continued cost of living adjustments when such adjustments are provided to management service employees in the executive branch.