A-Engrossed

House Bill 2706

Ordered by the House February 17
Including House Amendments dated February 17

Sponsored by Representative SCHARF, Senator GELSER BLOUIN; Representatives REYNOLDS, RUIZ, WRIGHT
(Presession filed.)

SUMMARY

The following summary is not prepared by the sponsors of the measure and is not a part of the body thereof subject to consideration by the Legislative Assembly. It is an editor's brief statement of the essential features of the measure.

Modifies definition of “former foster child” for purposes of tuition and fee waiver program, Oregon Opportunity Grant program and foster child scholarship program. Modifies definition of “institution of higher education” for purposes of tuition and fee waiver program and foster child scholarship program.

A BILL FOR AN ACT

Relating to foster children attending institution of higher education; creating new provisions; and amending ORS 348.272 and 350.300.

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

SECTION 1. ORS 350.300, as amended by section 2, chapter 42, Oregon Laws 2022, is amended to read:

350.300. (1) Notwithstanding ORS 341.290, 352.105 or 353.050, a student who is a current foster child or former foster child or a current homeless youth or former homeless youth, under 25 years of age and enrolled in courses totaling one or more credit hours at an institution of higher education as an undergraduate student shall have the amount of tuition and all fees levied against the student waived if attending an institution of higher education for purposes of pursuing an initial undergraduate degree.

(2) A student is entitled to waiver of tuition and all fees under subsection (1) of this section until the student has received the equivalent of four years of undergraduate education.

(3) As a condition of receiving a tuition waiver for an academic year, the student must complete and submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) for that academic year.

(4) A waiver of tuition and all fees under subsection (1) of this section may be reduced by the amount of any federal aid scholarships or grants, an award from the Oregon Opportunity Grant program established under ORS 348.205 and any other aid received from the institution of higher education. For the purposes of this subsection, “federal aid scholarships or grants” does not include Chafee Educational and Training Voucher Program grants under 42 U.S.C. 677.

(5) As used in this section:

(a) “Former foster child” means an individual who, for a total of 18 or more months while under 14 years of age or a total of six or more months while between 14 and 21 years of age, was:

(A) A ward of the court pursuant to ORS 419B.100 (1)(b) to (e), in the legal custody of the Department of Human Services for out-of-home placement [and not dismissed from care before reaching

NOTE: Matter in boldfaced type in an amended section is new; matter [italic and bracketed] is existing law to be omitted.

New sections are in boldfaced type.

LC 3397
(B) An Indian child subject to ORS 419B.600 to 419B.654, under the jurisdiction of a tribal court for out-of-home placement [and not dismissed from care before reaching 16 years of age].

(b) “Homeless youth” means a person who:

(A) Experienced homelessness for a total of six or more months while between 14 and 24 years of age;

(B) While experiencing homelessness as described in subparagraph (A) of this paragraph, received services from an organization contracted by the Department of Human Services to provide services to homeless persons or from a host home, as defined by the department by rule; and

(C) Was at least 16 years of age when the person last received the services described in subparagraph (B) of this paragraph.

(c) “Institution of higher education” means:

(A) A public university listed in ORS 352.002;

(B) A community college operated under ORS chapter 341; [or]

(C) A career school, as defined in ORS 345.010; or

[D] The Oregon Health and Science University.

SECTION 2. ORS 348.272 is amended to read:

348.272. (1) As used in this section:

(a) “Former foster child” has the meaning given that term in ORS 350.300.

(b) “Institution of higher education” means:

(A) A public university listed in ORS 352.002;

(B) The Oregon Health and Science University;

(C) A career school, as defined in ORS 345.010;

(D) A community college operated under ORS chapter 341; or

(E) An Oregon-based, regionally accredited independent institution.

(2) In addition to any other scholarships provided by law, the Higher Education Coordinating Commission shall award scholarships to any individual applying for enrollment or enrolled in an institution of higher education who is a current foster child or former foster child.

(3) Scholarships awarded under this section shall be in an amount to be determined by the commission based on the funds that are made available for the awarding year.

(4) If a student who is a current foster child or former foster child continues to remain enrolled in a public university listed in ORS 352.002, a community college or an Oregon-based, regionally accredited independent institution, the student is entitled to apply for renewal of the scholarship until the student has received the equivalent of four years of undergraduate education.

(5) The Director of the Office of Student Access and Completion may require proof that a student is a current foster child or former foster child.

SECTION 3. The amendments to ORS 348.272 and 350.300 by sections 1 and 2 of this 2023 Act apply to tuition and fees assessed on and after the effective date of this 2023 Act.