

SB 1533 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Rules

Action Date: 02/15/24

Action: Do pass and refer to Ways and Means by prior reference.

Vote: 4-0-1-0

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

Exc: 1 - Knopp

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: No revenue impact

Prepared By: Leslie Porter, LPRO Analyst

Meeting Dates: 2/13, 2/15

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure increases the number of the most commonly spoken languages that state and county voters' pamphlets have to be translated into and increases the number of people required to speak a language for it to qualify. It also increases the number of translators on the Translation Advisory Council.

Detailed Summary

Increases the number of the most commonly spoken languages in each county, other than English, into which the Secretary of State is required to translate state and county voters' pamphlets, from the top five to the top 10. Increases the number of people required to speak a language for it to qualify as a top 10 language, from 100 to 300. Increases the number of translators on the Translation Advisory Council from five to 10. Applies provisions to voters' pamphlets distributed on or after January 31, 2025.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- The legislative history of this initiative
- The benefits of expanding the available translation languages
- The formula for determining the top ten languages of the state and of each county
- The use of translators

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

The Oregon voters' pamphlet is a publication produced and distributed by the Secretary of State (SOS) Elections Division. A voters' pamphlet is produced for each primary and general election, as well as for any special statewide election. One copy of the voters' pamphlet is mailed to every household in the state. The voters' pamphlet includes information about candidates, measures, recognized political parties, and any assembly of electors. It also includes instructions for marking the ballot, a complete list of federal and state candidates, and other information on the voting process.

A county may publish a county voters' pamphlet and distribute it themselves; publish a county voters' pamphlet and have it inserted into the state voters' pamphlet for elections that the SOS is required to publish; or not publish a county voters' pamphlet and have certain local candidates and measures be eligible for inclusion in the state voters' pamphlet (OAR 165-007-0030).

[House Bill 3021 \(2021\)](#) requires the SOS to ensure that each state and county voters' pamphlet mailed to county residents is also translated into the most common languages spoken in the state and each county, other than English, and is made available on the SOS and applicable county websites. The measure specifies sections of the

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voters' pamphlet required to be professionally translated by the SOS and allows the submission of translations of certain candidate and measure statements. Lastly, the measure establishes a Translation Advisory Council and requires the SOS to consult with the council on the translation of voters' pamphlets.

[Senate Bill 169 A \(2023\)](#) proposed to increase the number of most commonly spoken languages in each county, other than English, into which the Secretary of State is required to translate and print state and county voters' pamphlets, from five to 10 and to increase the requisite number of people who have to speak a language for it to be considered a top 10 language from 100 to 300.