

HB 2405 -2 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Higher Education and Workforce Development

Prepared By: Ellen O'Brien, LPRO Analyst

Sub-Referral To: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Meeting Dates: 3/4, 4/3, 4/8

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure appropriates money from the General Fund to the Department of Corrections for distribution to four correctional institutions in Eastern Oregon to provide education programs to adults in custody. It declares an emergency and take effect on July 1, 2025.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Interaction between House Bill 2405 and House Bill 2747
- Potential for rehabilitation and reduced recidivism
- Partnerships between DOC, universities, and community colleges
- Concentration of AICs, disparity in services at Eastern Oregon correctional institutions
- Provisions of amendment
- Focus on Snake River Correctional Institution and Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution
- Readiness of SRCI and EOCI to facilitate higher education programs
- Self-sustaining funding after initial investment

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-2 The amendment replaces the measure. It appropriates \$2 million from the General Fund from to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission to distribute to Eastern Oregon University, to provide university degrees to adults in custody at four correctional institutions in Eastern Oregon.

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 (HECC) 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 Oregon Department of Corrections (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. The report identified seven additional postsecondary academic programs offered at correctional facilities by Oregon universities and colleges that may now be Pell Grant-eligible.

[Senate Bill 1522 \(2022\)](#) created a pilot program to deliver online education at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility and Snake River Correctional Institution. On [September 23, 2023](#), the Senate Interim Committee on Education received an update from the DOC on the implementation of the SB 1522 online education pilot program. [Senate Bill 270 \(2023\)](#) permitted adults in custody to apply for and enroll in postsecondary academic programs, including

remote programs at community colleges and universities throughout Oregon. [Senate Bill 269 \(2023\)](#) required the DOC and the HECC to enter a memorandum of understanding regarding the correctional education system.

PRELIMINARY