

HB 2041 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Judiciary

Prepared By: Addie Smith, Counsel

Meeting Dates: 2/18, 2/25

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Adds parole and probation officers employed by the Department of Corrections to the definition of "police officer" for the purpose of life insurance benefits.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Pursuant to an agreement, the Department of Corrections (DOC) operates community corrections in Douglas and Linn Counties. The parole and probation officers employed by DOC in those counties are unionized and represented by the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME). Under current statute, parole and probation officers employed by the department are not included in the definition of "police officers" under ORS 243.005. This means that they are not eligible for life insurance benefits under ORS 243.015-55. The department had erroneously been providing its parole and probation officers this DOC parole and benefit. On March 3, 2015, the department informed its parole and probation officers that they would no longer receive this benefit. Because that decision was based on the language of the statute, the department declined to bargain with AFSCME on the issue, and also refused to arbitrate the dispute as the collective bargaining agreement between the union and DOC required.

In response, on May 27, 2015, AFSCME filed an unfair labor practices complaint, UP-012-15. That complaint was resolved on March 26, 2016 when DOC agreed to reimburse DOC's parole and probation officers for their enrollment in the Public Employees' Benefit Board (PEBB) Accidental Death and Dismemberment life insurance policy that covers other DOC employees until there was a statutory fix. DOC also agreed to jointly support legislation to amend ORS 243.025 to expand statutorily guaranteed life insurance to DOC parole and probation officers.

House Bill 2041 is the statutory fix that ensures that DOC Parole and Probation Officers have access to PEBB life insurance benefits.