

SB 731 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY**Carrier:** Rep. Nosse**House Committee On Rules****Action Date:** 05/29/19**Action:** Do Pass.**Vote:** 6-1-0-0**Yeas:** 6 - Boles, Holvey, Nosse, Smith Warner, Sprenger, Williamson**Nays:** 1 - Wilson**Fiscal:** No fiscal impact**Revenue:** No revenue impact**Prepared By:** Josh Nasbe, Counsel**Meeting Dates:** 5/20, 5/29**WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:**

Permits a recognized student government of Oregon community college or public university to make a statement or issue a resolution to promote or oppose the adoption of a measure or the gathering of signatures on an initiative or referendum petition. Permits public employees and board members of community colleges and public universities to take action to allow student governments to engage in making the statement or issuing the resolution, as specified. Permits student governments to use student fees to assist with making statements or issuing resolutions, as specified. Prohibits the use of student fees or public funds for other political activities. Takes effect 91st day following adjournment sine die.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Clarity of existing law
- Free expression
- Role of student government

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Oregon has 17 community colleges and seven public universities, serving over 450,000 students each year. Each institution has an associated student government. Under current law, public employees may not engage in political activities while on the job during work hours. In addition, a person may not require a public employee to engage in political activities. Public institutions have interpreted these prohibitions to include a student government making a statement or issuing a resolution to support or oppose a ballot measure, initiative, or referendum. Senate Bill 731 permits a student government to make a statement or issue a resolution to support or oppose a measure, initiative, or referendum petition. The bill permits student governments to use student fees and institutional resources to facilitate making a statement or issuing a resolution, such as renting a room or printing materials.