

SB 234 -1 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Education

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Meeting Dates: 3/8

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Requires Department of Corrections to consider educational program as qualification for adults in custody to receive monetary performance reward. Specifies qualifying education program as training for high school equivalency test or post-secondary education program that is approved by Higher Education Coordinating Commission.

REVENUE: May have revenue impact, but no statement yet issued

FISCAL: May have fiscal impact, but no statement yet issued

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-1 Directs Higher Education Coordinating Commission to study and develop recommendations for serving adults in custody who are eligible to receive federal student grants. Requires commission to convene certain stakeholders as part of study and to submit findings in report to legislative committees for higher education by December 31, 2021. Sunsets June 30, 3033. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

BACKGROUND:

In 1994, voters approved Measure 17, which amended the state constitution to require that adults in custody work full-time or be engaged in a full-time combination of education and work. Article I, section 41, subsection 2 of the Oregon Constitution provides that education may be offered to adults in custody long as they spend at least half of their time in work or on-the-job training.

The Oregon Department of Corrections (DOC) operates a reward system for adults in custody known as the Performance Recognition and Award System (PRAS). Adults in custody may earn PRAS points through participation in prison programs and job assignments. These points are translated into monetary deposits for each individual on a monthly basis which may be used to pay for various items, including educational courses. DOC also offers several educational programs to adults in custody, including preparation for the General Education Development (GED) high school equivalency test, English as a Second Language (ESL) courses, community college courses, and special education programs for adults in custody with disabilities.

Senate Bill 234 requires the Department of Corrections to consider educational programs offered by DOC as qualification for adults in custody to receive monetary performance rewards such as PRAS points and specifies requirements.