

SB 1538 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Health Care

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Sub-Referral To: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Meeting Dates: 2/7, 2/9

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Establishes a dental program in the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) to provide oral health coverage to low-income citizens of the island nations in the Compact of Free Association (COFA) with incomes below 138 percent of the federal poverty level. Directs OHA to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate outreach and assistance to applicants and enrollees. Requires OHA to accept as verification of eligibility an attestation that an applicant meets requirements. Requires OHA to contract with dental care organizations to provide oral health services to individuals enrolled in the program. Specifies covered services will have no out-of-pocket costs for enrollees. Appropriates funds to administer program.

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:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

After World War II, the United States assumed administration of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. Individuals from these islands, referred to as “Compact of Free Association” (COFA) citizens, can freely migrate, without work permits or visas, and study, live, and work in the United States. In 2021, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) issued [guidance](#) directing states to cover all Medicaid benefits included in the state plan for COFA citizens who otherwise meet all of the eligibility requirements in the state plan.

Senate Bill 1538 ensures dental coverage for low-income COFA citizens who reside in Oregon and lack access to affordable dental coverage.