

HB 4121 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Judiciary and Ballot Measure 110 Implementation

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Meeting Dates: 2/21, 2/22

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Allows presiding judges of judicial districts to appoint child support referees. Sets minimum qualifications and requires partial compensation for the positions to be paid from Title IV-D of the Social Security Act. Specifies the types of cases that may be referred to a child support referee. Allows for de novo review by the circuit court, either by party request or by the circuit court's own motion; creates timelines for review. Gives a child support referee's order the same force and effect of a circuit court judgment.

REVENUE: No revenue impact

FISCAL: Has minimal fiscal impact

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Administrative and judicial processes for child support matters
- Referee expertise
- Federal dollars reimbursement rate of 66%
- Juvenile court referees
- Having a centralized statewide system
- Service efficiency and outcome consistency
- "De novo" review, meaning "to start anew," and right to appeal
- Measure specifies types of matters that would qualify for assignment to a referee
- Goal of providing specialized services in child support matters

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Court referees perform certain work of circuit court judges in specialized areas. Oregon currently utilizes referees in Juvenile Court (419A.150). House Bill 4121 would create the statutory authority for presiding judges of judicial districts to delegate specific matters related to the financial support of children, such as establishing parentage and child support orders (including modification and enforcement) to a referee. It would allow for de novo review of a referee's ruling by a circuit court, and require the referee positions to be partially paid for through Title IV-D of the Social Security Act (Appropriations for Child Support and Establishing Paternity).