

HB 2615 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans

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Sub-Referral To: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Meeting Dates: 1/26

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Allows veterans to participate in the Oregon Promise Program if they first enroll in classes within 12 months after being discharged from the military. Specifies that veterans may participate in the program without using G.I. Bill benefits, or without having Program benefits reduced by the amount received from the G.I. Bill.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

The Oregon Promise Program was established by the Legislative Assembly with the passage of Senate Bill 81 (2015). The measure resulted from a study conducted by the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) regarding the viability of a program to allow students to attend community college for a specified period tuition-free. First instituted for the 2016-17 academic year, the program provides state grants to help cover tuition at any Oregon community college for qualifying recent high school graduates and those who have recently attained a GED.

To qualify, applicants must meet specified criteria, including: Oregon residency; maintaining satisfactory academic progress; enrolling and maintaining at least half-time continuous enrollment during fall, winter, and spring terms; not yet completing more than 90 college credits; and any requirements specific to the attending institution.

In general, students who have been out of high school for longer than six months before beginning community college are not eligible to participate in the Oregon Promise Program. House Bill 2615 specifies that recently discharged members of the military may qualify if they begin classes within 12 months of discharge.