

## HB 2706 -4 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

### House Committee On Higher Education

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**Sub-Referral To:** Joint Committee On Ways and Means

**Meeting Dates:** 1/26, 2/14, 2/16

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#### **WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:**

Modifies the definition of "former foster child" for the purposes of granting financial aid to students at institutions of higher education.

#### **ISSUES DISCUSSED:**

- Youth choosing between adoption and financial aid

#### **EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:**

-4 Expands definition of eligible "former foster child" to include individuals who were in foster care for total of at least 18 months while under the age of 14. Expands tuition waiver for former foster children and youth experiencing homelessness to cover tuition at private career schools. Permits Higher Education Coordinating Commission to award scholarships to former foster children enrolled in private career school.

#### **BACKGROUND:**

Under ORS 350.300, tuition and fees are currently waived for current and former foster children as well as current and former homeless youth. A "former foster child" is currently eligible for a tuition and fee waiver if they were:

1. In foster care for at least 6 months between the ages of 14 and 21, and
2. Did not leave foster care prior to age 16.

House Bill 2706 removes the second requirement. Under the new definition, any child who was in foster care for at least 6 months between the ages of 14 and 21 will be eligible for a tuition and fee waiver, regardless of the age at which they left the state's care. Eligibility for both the Oregon Opportunity Grant (ORS 348.205) and scholarships for current or former foster children (ORS 348.272) rely on the definition of "former foster child" in ORS 350.300, meaning that eligibility for these financial aid programs would also be broader under HB 2706.

House Bill 2706 removes one condition for receiving state-administered financial aid for former foster children.