

SJR 34 A -A3, -A4 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Rules

Prepared By: Melissa Leoni, LPRO Analyst

Meeting Dates: 6/22, 6/23

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Proposes amendment to Oregon Constitution to establish Independent Public Service Compensation Commission (Commission). Prohibits officer or employee of the State of Oregon, registered lobbyists, or an immediate family member of an individual of these classes of individuals, from serving on the Commission, and allows the Legislative Assembly to create additional ineligible classes of individuals. Directs Commission to establish salaries for specified public officials, including: Governor; Secretary of State; State Treasurer; Attorney General; Bureau of Labor and Industries Commissioner; Supreme Court Judges and other judges governed by the Oregon Judicial Department; District Attorneys; State Senator; and State Representative. Provides that moneys sufficient to pay for salaries are appropriated from General Fund upon Commission's adoption of its determinations. Refers proposed amendment to people for their approval or rejection at next regular general election.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-A3 Clarifies that if Commission reduces the salary of any judge, the reduction is not effective for judge until expiration of judge's term.

-A4 Clarifies that compensation of a judge shall not be diminished during the term for which the judge is elected.

BACKGROUND:

Oregon law requires each county to appoint a county compensation board to recommend the compensation schedule for elected county officials. A similar commission was required to review and make recommendations for the salaries of certain state officials, but the commission was largely inactive from its establishment in 1983 until its abolishment in 2017.

Specific to state legislatures, the National Conference on State Legislatures (NCSL) found that 21 states set compensation for lawmakers with input from an independent commission. Certain states also rely on independent commissions in setting compensation or benefits for selected other statewide officials, which may include members of the executive or judicial branches.

The Oregon Public Officials Compensation Commission (Commission) was required during two periods of Oregon history to review and make recommendations to the Legislative Assembly on salaries for certain state public officials. The Commission was established via legislation in 1983, but all positions became vacant in 2000. Legislation enacted in 2007 revitalized the Commission with new membership and a revised scope of work. The Commission's 2008 recommendations were introduced amidst the Great Recession, and the Legislative Assembly ultimately declined to increase compensation for public officials. The Commission went unfunded after 2008 and was eliminated in 2017 along with other state boards and commissions identified as inactive or obsolete.

Senate Joint Resolution 34 A proposes an amendment to the Oregon Constitution to establish the Independent Public Service Compensation Commission to determine salaries for specific public officials.