

SB 524 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Judiciary

Action Date: 03/14/23

Action: Do pass and refer to Ways and Means by prior reference.

Vote: 3-2-0-0

Yeas: 3 - Gelser Blouin, Manning Jr, Prozanski

Nays: 2 - Linthicum, Thatcher

Fiscal: Has minimal fiscal impact

Revenue: Revenue impact issued

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Meeting Dates: 2/28, 3/14

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Directs the Oregon Criminal Justice Commission (CJC) to convene advisory council to consider the policy implications of identifying specific crimes for which a conviction disqualifies an individual from being issued a teaching, personnel service or administrative license, or a public charter school registration, or from being eligible to be employed by, or enter into a contract with, a school district for certain positions. Requires chairperson of the CJC to appoint not more than 20 members and include members representing specific organizations. Directs the advisory council to review list of crimes for which a conviction is a disqualifying conviction and to make recommendations for minimizing barriers to employment for individuals with prior criminal convictions while maintaining safety of students. Describes recommendations the advisory council may consider and develop. Directs the council to consider specific standards, data, outcomes, processes, and changes to the criminal justice system when developing recommendations. Directs CJC to provide staff support to the advisory council. Requires CJC to report to the Legislative Assembly by September 15, 2024. Sunsets the advisory council on January 2, 2025. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Examples of candidates excluded from employment due to decades old criminal record
- Opportunity to analyze if current list of crimes is overly restrictive or underinclusive
- Whether background check process could be changed to include more information

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

The Teacher Standards and Practices Commission (TSPC) was established to maintain and improve performance in the education profession by, among other things, licensing teachers, administrators, and other personnel employed in Oregon schools, and by taking disciplinary actions when educators commit crimes. Currently, the TSPC is prohibited from issuing a teaching, personnel service or administrative license, or a public charter school registration to an individual who has been convicted of one of the crimes listed in ORS 342.143. Similarly, pursuant to ORS 326.603, an individual convicted of a crime listed in ORS 342.143 is ineligible to be employed by, or enter into a contract with, a school district for certain positions with the school district.

Senate Bill 524 directs the Criminal Justice Commission (CJC) to convene and provide staff support to an advisory council of not more than 20 members, with 15 members representing different relevant organizations and groups, to consider the policy implications of the list of disqualifying criminal convictions in ORS 342.143. The advisory council would be required to review the list of crimes and make recommendations for minimizing barriers to employment for individuals with prior criminal convictions while maintaining the safety of students.

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The measure requires CJC to present recommendations developed by the advisory council in a report to the Legislative Assembly no later than September 15, 2024.