

SB 955 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Judiciary

Action Date: 03/22/23

Action: Do pass and requesting referral to Ways and Means.

Vote: 5-0-0-0

Yeas: 5 - Gelser Blouin, Linthicum, Manning Jr, Prozanski, Thatcher

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: No revenue impact

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Meeting Dates: 3/16, 3/22

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Appropriates \$300,000 in General Fund moneys for the 2023-2025 biennium for the Oregon State University Extension Service's expenses in establishing an endowment to fund an AgriStress Helpline in Oregon. Declares emergency, effective July 1, 2023.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Unique stressors of agricultural producers and workers
- Suicide rates are disproportionately higher in agricultural and rural communities as compared to the general population
- Wallowa County suicide rate is three to four times higher than the general population rate
- Personal experiences regarding suicides in families and communities
- Oregon State University Extension Service has already obtained seven federal grants for the helpline
- A total of \$2 million is needed to fully fund the endowment
- \$250,000 has been raised so far

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

The AgriStress Helpline is a mental health hotline specifically for agricultural producers and workers and their particular health needs. It was created and is staffed by a partnership of nonprofits who provide care during the call and refer callers to resources in their community for follow-up care. The helpline is staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and language services are available in over 160 languages. Six states currently have an AgriStress Helpline: Connecticut, Missouri, Pennsylvania, Texas, Virginia, and Wyoming.

Senate Bill 955 appropriates \$300,000 for establishing an endowment to fund an AgriStress Helpline in Oregon.