

SB 1553 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Carrier: Sen. Lieber, Sen. Prozanski

Senate Committee On Judiciary

Action Date: 02/14/24

Action: Do pass with amendments. (Printed A-Eng.)

Vote: 5-0-0-0

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

Fiscal: Has minimal fiscal impact

Revenue: Has minimal revenue impact

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Meeting Dates: 2/12, 2/14

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Expands the crime of interfering with public transportation to include when a person, while in or on a public transit vehicle or public transit station, knowingly consumes a controlled substance that is not lawfully possessed by the person. Provides that a conviction for interfering with public transportation established by this measure shall be classified as a designated drug-related misdemeanor.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Definition of "transit stations"
- Safety of public transit for youth riders
- Decrease in use of public transit due to safety concerns
- Incidents of fentanyl use and drug overdoses on public transit buses and trains
- TriMet has doubled its budget for safety and security
- Safety response teams are trained in de-escalation techniques

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

Replaces the measure.

BACKGROUND:

Under current Oregon law, it is a Class C misdemeanor crime to interfere with public transportation by engaging in a variety of conduct, specified in ORS 166.116. The behavior constituting criminal interference includes entering or remaining unlawfully on public transit vehicles or at public transit stations; interfering with the movement of, or access to, public transit vehicles; engaging in disorderly conduct on public transit vehicles or at public transit stations; and subjecting public transport passengers or employees to offensive physical contact.

The Department of Corrections, under ORS 423.478, is responsible for community-based supervision, sanctions, and services for offenders convicted of certain crimes, including those designated as drug-related misdemeanors by statute. Currently, the crimes listed in statute as designated drug-related misdemeanors involve the unlawful possession of a controlled substance.