

HB 2551

Background checks for special campus security officers

HB 2551 adds an extra vetting process for special campus security officers at Oregon's public universities, restoring a previous system that was unintentionally eliminated.

Background

Special campus security officers currently occupy an unusual niche. Unlike safety personnel at lower and higher levels of authority, they are not subject to background checks by the Department of Public Safety Standards and Training (DPSST). Universities that choose to hire campus security officers are not required to examine the disciplinary records that DPSST maintains on security and law enforcement personnel during their hiring process. This was previously a requirement, but changed when the Oregon University System was dissolved in 2015.

Problem

Unlike police officers and contract security, special campus security officers at Oregon's public universities don't undergo a Department of Public Safety Standards and Training (DPSST) background check that would show any previous disciplinary action in a previous law enforcement career. Right now, special campus security officers only undergo criminal background checks prior to hiring. Unfortunately, criminal background checks don't reveal officers' disciplinary records, even for serious misconduct. Having access to disciplinary records would allow universities to make better-informed choices about whom to hire to keep our students safe.

Solution

HB 2551 requires universities to request disciplinary records from DPSST and allows DPSST to provide it.



For more information, please contact Representative Zach Hudson at rep.zachhudson@oregonlegislature.gov.

FAQs

Q: What are special campus security officers and how are they different from other security personnel and police officers?

A: Special campus security officers could be characterized as a middle ground between police officers and regular campus security officers. Under ORS 352.118, special campus security officers may make probable cause arrests like police officers. They do not have “stop and frisk” authority (ORS 181A.972 (7)) and may not carry firearms (ORS 352.118).

Q: Can the university still hire an applicant with previous disciplinary action on their record?

A: Yes, but that would be up to the university. Universities can judge applicants on a case-by-case basis. This bill would just provide them the missing relevant information to make that decision.

Q: What does the amendment do?

A: The requested amendment clarifies that disciplinary records requests do not need to originate with a university’s Board of Trustees. It ensures that university HR departments can make these requests.



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