

## SB 474 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

### Senate Committee On Judiciary

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**Action Date:** 02/20/25

**Action:** Do pass with amendments. Refer to Ways and Means by prior reference. (Printed A-Eng).

**Vote:** 6-0-0-0

**Yeas:** 6 - Broadman, Gelser Blouin, Manning Jr, McLane, Prozanski, Thatcher

**Fiscal:** Fiscal impact issued

**Revenue:** Revenue impact issued

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**Meeting Dates:** 2/4, 2/20

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#### WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure creates the Criminal Defense Clinical Legal Education Program (Clinic) within the Higher Education Coordinating Commission. The Clinic will train and supervise court certified law students on misdemeanor criminal cases. The measure also establishes the Criminal Defense Clinical Legal Education Program Fund separate from the General Fund and appropriates \$3,579,824 for purposes of administering the program. The measure takes effect July 1, 2025.

#### ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Benefits of program to students and defendants
- Students from clinic entering similar career fields after graduation
- Provisions of measure

#### EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

Specifies the amount of \$3,579,824 to be appropriated from the General Fund and deposited to the Criminal Defense Clinical Legal Education Program Fund established by this Act.

#### BACKGROUND:

In 2024 the legislature enacted House Bill 5204, which included an appropriation of \$2.1 million for distribution to the University of Oregon (\$951,236), Lewis and Clark (\$552,600) and Willamette University (\$552,600) Law Schools to provide training and supervision of court certified law students to undertake misdemeanor cases. This initiative was expected to train a combined total of 60 law students to provide public defense services for eligible defendants for between 300 to 400 misdemeanor cases and requires each law school to report annually to the Public Defense Commission on the total number of students trained, clients served, as well as the nature of the legal issues and case outcomes.

On December 11, 2024, during an informational meeting of the Joint Committee on Addiction and Community Safety Response, the Oregon law schools represented to the committee that over 160 cases had received services as part of the clinical programs created by the above appropriation and based on their current progress, were expected to provide public defense services on 450-500 cases.