

SB 604 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Education

Action Date: 03/12/25

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

Vote: 4-1-0-0

Yeas: 4 - Frederick, Gelser Blouin, Sollman, Weber

Nays: 1 - Robinson

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: No revenue impact

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Meeting Dates: 2/19, 3/12

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure establishes the Strong Start Program at the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) to provide academic support and support services to first-year and underrepresented students at public universities. It requires HECC to adopt rules that outline the services provided by the program and establish a distribution formula for funds. The measure creates the Strong Start Program Fund, administered by HECC, and appropriates an unspecified amount of money from the General Fund to the program fund. It also appropriates \$700,000 to HECC to distribute to the seven public universities to cover the costs of administering the Strong Start Program. It declares an emergency and takes effect July 1, 2025.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Impact on students
- Access to higher education

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

The amendment appropriates \$700,000 to HECC to distribute to the seven public universities to cover the costs of administering the Strong Start Program .

BACKGROUND:

In 2021 and 2022, the Legislative Assembly appropriated funds to the seven public universities in Oregon to fund Strong Start programs with the purpose of assisting students in the transition from high school to college. [Senate Bill 5528 \(2021\)](#) appropriated \$4.7 million for this purpose, outlined in the [budget report](#) prepared by the Legislative Fiscal Office. [House Bill 5202 \(2022\)](#) appropriated an additional \$7.5 million to the programs for the 2022-2023 academic year.

On [January 19, 2023](#), the House Committee on Higher Education held an informational meeting on transitions to higher education that included testimony about Strong Start programs, and on [April 20, 2023](#), the committee held an informational meeting on the Strong Start Grant, during which university representatives presented information on the [outcomes](#) for students who received services from Strong Start and Summer Bridge programs.