

SB 314 A -A4 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Joint Committee On Ways and Means

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Meeting Dates: 6/21

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Directs Oregon Early Learning Division (ELD) to support Relief Nursery programs statewide to provide services to “at-risk” children. Defines Relief Nursery program and requires programs to report child participation and progress to a database created and maintained by the Oregon Association of Relief Nurseries (OARN). Requires programs be certified by OARN. Describes requirements for use of funds. Requires ELD to enter contracts with Relief Nursery programs and requires programs to participate in statewide evaluation. Excludes statutory forfeiture proceeds from calculation of community matching funds. Defines terms. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-A4 Restores the authority of the Early Learning Division (ELD) to contract with relief nurseries. Removes the requirement that Relief Nursery programs be certified by the Oregon Association of Relief Nurseries. Permits the ELD to adopt rules and take any action before the operative date of the bill.

BACKGROUND:

Relief nurseries provide early childhood support services to low-income parents and children at risk of child abuse or neglect. They are intended to reduce the risk factors that contribute to child abuse or neglect, improve family stability, improve parenting abilities, and support child development. According to the Oregon Association of Relief Nurseries (OARN), there are 31 relief nurseries in the state.

Oregon law requires the Oregon Early Learning Division (ELD) to support relief nurseries as funding becomes available and encourages communities to develop such programs. Relief nurseries are required to include therapeutic early childhood programs and parental education and support. They are also required to be consistent with the early learning system and have parents of relief nursery children involved in the program. Statute also requires programs to get matching funds from the local community equal to 25 percent of any state funding. Senate Bill 314-A directs ELD to support Relief Nursery programs statewide as funding becomes available, and requires each program to be certified by OARN. It specifies how ELD’s relief nursery funds can be spent, and requires that programs participate in statewide evaluations conducted by OARN. The measure also excludes statutory forfeiture proceeds to Relief Nursery programs from the calculation of community matching funds.