

SB 85 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Carrier: Rep. Bynum

House Committee On Business and Labor

Action Date: 05/17/17

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

Vote: 9-0-0-0

Yeas: 9 - Barreto, Bynum, Doherty, Evans, Fahey, Hack, Heard, Holvey, Kennemer

Fiscal: No fiscal impact

Revenue: No revenue impact

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WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Modifies the membership of the Telecommunication Devices Access Program Advisory Committee.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Difficulty recruiting people to serve on committee
- Whether parent or caregiver of person with disability should be allowed to serve

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

Requires one position to be filled by person who is visually impaired or deaf-blind.

BACKGROUND:

The Oregon Public Utility Commission (PUC) is the state's regulatory body for investor-owned utilities, including telephone utilities. The Commission's Residential Service Protection Fund section oversees three programs that assist customers with telecommunications services: the Oregon Telephone Assistance Program reduces monthly telecommunications bills for qualifying Oregonians; the Oregon Telecommunications Relay Service allows persons with hearing and/or speech disabilities to place and receive phone calls; and the Telecommunication Devices Access Program (TDAP) provides adaptive equipment to Oregonians with hearing, vision, speech, mobility or cognitive impairments.

As part of its TDAP program, the PUC appoints members to and administers the TDAP Advisory Committee, which includes members who are deaf, hard of hearing, speech impaired, professionals in the field of speech impairment, and representatives of telephone companies that provide, or are interested in providing, telecommunication devices access relay services. The advisory committee, which sunsets in 2020, is comprised of 12 members. The PUC indicates that it is difficult to fill vacancies on the advisory committee and that there is a desire to add representation for persons with vision impairments.

Senate Bill 85-A modifies the membership of the TDAP Advisory Committee as follows: reduces the number of consumers from nine to five and adds a visually-impaired member; specifies that the professional member may be in the field of visual impairment; and removes the PUC member.