



SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

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Legislation will require consideration of minority coaches at state universities
House Bill 3118 will apply to hiring of head coaches and athletic directors

SALEM – Oregon will become the first state in the nation to require state institutions of higher education to interview qualified minority candidates when hiring a head coach or athletic director with legislation passed this afternoon. House Bill 3118 seeks to address the racial disparity between players and coaches in many professional and collegiate sports by requiring interviews unless an institution is unable to identify a qualified minority candidate willing to interview.

“House Bill 3118 will provide another avenue for qualified minorities to develop their skills and work towards becoming a head coach or an athletic director,” said Senator Margaret Carter (D-Portland), who carried the bill on the floor.

Studies show that most of the nation’s top coaching jobs are currently held by white coaches. In 2008, only four Division I football head coaching positions were held by African American coaches, out of a total 119 programs. Overall, white coaches hold 90.6 percent of Division I men’s coaching posts and over 89 percent in Divisions II and III.

The disproportionate number of white coaches does not reflect the racial makeup of the nation’s student athletes. During the 2004-2005 athletic season, 61.7 percent of male athletes and 70.1 percent of female athletes were white.

“Our goal should be to find the best qualified coaches to lead and represent our collegiate athletic teams without regard to race,” said Senate President Peter Courtney (D-Salem). “This bill will ensure that the wealth of experience, talent and leadership skills of minorities will be considered when those decisions are made.”

Senator Mark Hass (D-Beaverton), chair of the Senate Education Committee, expressed his initial skepticism toward the bill and eventual promotion of HB 3118 during his floor speech.

“Eventually I came around to the indisputable fact that guys like me are not experts and should never be allowed to pass judgment on the barriers minorities face when it comes to hiring,” said Hass.

HB 3118 is modeled after the “Rooney Rule” in the National Football League which specifies that NFL

teams must give fair interviews to minority candidates whenever a head-coaching position comes open.

The bill will now go back to the House for concurrence.

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