

REVENUE: No revenue impact

FISCAL: Minimal fiscal impact, no statement issued

Action:	Do Pass as Amended and Be Printed Engrossed
Vote:	6 - 0 - 1
Yeas:	Berger, Buckley, Esquivel, Hunt, Roblan, Rosenbaum
Nays:	0
Exc.:	Thatcher
Prepared By:	Jim Keller and Jim Stembridge, Administrator
Meeting Dates:	5/21, 6/4, 6/8

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Adds definition for a “veteran”. Deletes, for appointment as Director of Veterans’ Affairs, written approval of the statutory veterans’ Advisory Committee. Provides additional criteria for distribution of county veteran service officer funds, based on number of veterans residing in each county. Authorizes Department of Veterans’ Affairs to withhold county distribution of the base amount and funds to enhance and expand services, if county reduces or eliminates its support of the program, and to provide the services itself. Creates Training and Certification Committee for Veterans’ Service Officers, including those of congressionally-chartered veterans’ organizations, to improve coordination, to provide criteria and goals for training of state, local, and congressionally-chartered veterans’ service officers, and to assist in establishing certification criteria.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Nature and purpose of the Veterans Advisory Committee
- Allocation of state funds to counties
- Work of veterans service officers
- Funding for national organizations for the counseling they do in Oregon Legislative Administration
- Personnel, activities, and funding for veterans services in Multnomah County
- Impact on funding for Marion and Polk counties
- Qualifying service period for a veteran

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT: Replaces the measure.

BACKGROUND: Many of the benefits available to qualified veterans and their dependents are difficult to access. The Department of Veterans Affairs and County Veterans’ Service Officers around the state advise veterans and their families about benefits and services to which they may be entitled, and also assist in applying for the benefits. Benefits may include federal benefits such as compensation, pensions, hospital care, outpatient treatment, burial, education, insurance, and home loans. State of Oregon benefits that may be available include car license plates, conservatorship, employment preferences, re-employment rights, property tax exemptions, education aid, help in obtaining copies of public records, and access to the State Veterans Home in The Dalles. The 2005 Legislative Assembly, through SB 1100, enhanced and expanded the services provided to veterans.