

Joint Committee on Ways and Means

Carrier – House: Rep. Beyer  
Carrier – Senate: Sen. Monroe

Revenue: No revenue impact

Fiscal: Fiscal statement issued

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Action: Do Pass the A-Engrossed Measure

Vote: 20 – 1 – 1

House

Yeas: Buckley, D. Edwards, Galizio, Garrard, Gilman, Jenson, Komp, Kotek, Nathanson, Richardson, Shields, G. Smith

Nays:

Exc:

Senate

Yeas: Carter, Girod, Johnson, Monroe, Nelson, Verger, Whitsett, Winters

Nays: Walker

Exc: Bates

Prepared By: Steve Bender, Legislative Fiscal Office

Meeting Date: May 29, 2009

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**WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:** Creates the Campus Veterans' Service Officer (VSO) Program in the Department of Veterans' Affairs, and assigns federally accredited VSOs to Oregon University System and community college campuses to provide benefits outreach to student veterans. Directs colleges and universities to provide office space for related veterans' services. Declares an emergency, effective on passage.

**ISSUES DISCUSSED:**

- Student veterans' needs and federal funding available
- State budget situation and lack of General Fund to finance this program
- Use of the Oregon War Veterans' Fund to finance the Campus VSO Program
- Funding of this program in the Department of Veterans' Affairs budget bill (HB 5048-A)

**EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT:** No amendment.

**BACKGROUND:** The Governor's Task Force on Veterans' Services Report (December 2008) recommended that VSOs be placed on Oregon's university and community college campuses to enable student veterans to obtain coordinated benefits and claims support. The Report found that approximately 5,800 Oregon veterans were receiving educational benefits available under the Post 9/11 GI Bill. This is only a small percentage of the people eligible for these benefits. The purpose of the Campus Veterans' Service Officer Program is to increase Oregon veterans' GI Bill benefits and to expand the number of veterans in post-secondary education.