

**REVENUE:** No revenue impact

**FISCAL:** May have fiscal impact, statement not yet issued

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**Action:** Without Recommendation as to Passage, Be Referred to the Committee on Rules, and then to Committee on Ways and Means by prior reference

**Vote:** 7 - 0 - 1

**Yeas:** Boone, Esquivel, Freeman, Komp, Riley, Weidner, Cowan

**Nays:** 0

**Exc.:** Matthews

**Prepared By:** David Molina, Administrator

**Meeting Dates:** 4/2, 4/9

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**WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:** Requires state agencies to add question on agency forms and publications regarding receipt of information about veterans' benefits. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

**ISSUES DISCUSSED:**

- Concern about county veteran service officer workload
- Challenges to providing benefits in a flexible and cost-efficient manner
- Federal benefit reimbursements not being exercised to the full extent possible
- The need for better data on veterans residing in Oregon that is captured and shared between agencies
- The need to identify all veterans residing in Oregon to ensure they receive their entitled benefits
- Some agencies are identifying veterans, however legislative mandate is necessary for agency accountability
- The lack of a statewide agency systematic approach to identifying veterans and providing them information about benefit eligibility
- Governor's Task Force on Veterans' Services Task Force top administrative recommendation

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

**BACKGROUND:** One of the Governor's Task Force on Veterans' Services Final Report (December 2008) top findings was that substantial amounts of federal aid (in benefit & compensation payments and health programming) are consistently unrealized because of a systemic failure of state, regional, and local public agencies to ask customer/client veterans' status. Currently, state agencies do not proactively ask customers/clients if they are veterans or proactively provide information to those veterans. The task force noted that the state receives \$162 return on investment for every \$1 invested in a veteran from federal reimbursements.

Recognizing the value in federal benefits reimbursements, the Utah Department of Veterans Affairs and that state's Department of Motor Vehicles initiated efforts to identify veterans—resulting in the discovery of 70,000 veterans that were not receiving benefits. In Oregon, only 22 percent of veterans are identified through the U.S. Census in the state system. Proponents assert that this lack of a statewide agency systematic approach foregoes \$4 billion in revenue of federal reimbursements to Oregon.

House Bill 3104 targets all agencies statewide to revisit, reengineer and execute a flexible and cost efficient mechanism that identifies and redirects Oregon veterans data to ensure federal reimbursement to the state.