

REVENUE: No revenue impact

FISCAL: Fiscal statement issued

Action: Be Adopted as Amended, Be Printed Engrossed, and Be Referred to the Committee on Revenue, then Rules by Prior Reference

Vote: 8 - 0 - 0

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

Nays: 0

Exc.: 0

Prepared By: David Molina, Administrator

Meeting Dates: 2/26, 3/26

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Proposes amendment to the Oregon Constitution to remove the term “war” as it pertains to the Oregon War Veterans’ Fund in order to broaden the eligibility pool of veterans. Removes the 30-year home loan provision to ensure qualified veterans who have been out of service, e.g. Cold War era, to become eligible. Removes the state residency requirement for the veteran in the case of unmarried spouses, thereby increasing the number of spouses eligible. Includes school or training, only as part of active duty training. Conforms to current statutory form and language. Refers proposed amendment to voters for their approval or rejection in November 2010.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- The need for veterans who have been out of service for more than 30-years to qualify for the Oregon Veterans Home Loan (ORVET) program
- The need to ensure more Oregon National Guard/Reserve citizen-soldiers who have been deployed to the Iraq and Afghanistan war are eligible
- Addresses Oregon Constitutional limitations; companion measures addresses similar federal limitations
- Oregon Congressional delegation recognizes the problem, and have prioritized legislation to address this issue

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT: Replaces the original measure.

BACKGROUND: The Oregon Constitution prevents veterans who have been out of service for more than 30 years from becoming eligible for the ORVET home loan program despite having earned that benefit. One of the top recommendations for the Governor’s Task Force on Veterans’ Services Final Report (December 2008) is to ensure the ORVET home loan program be aligned with the federal Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) home loan lifetime benefit.

House Joint Resolution 7 is an amendment to the Oregon Constitution to change eligibility requirements for the ORVET home loan program. The five major modifications include:

- removing the term “war” in the Oregon Constitution to broaden eligible qualified applicants
- use of term “veteran” as defined by ORS 488.225 to ensure more post-9/11 veterans are eligible
- extension to veterans who served a period of active duty under honorable conditions
- allowance for the spouse of a qualified veteran who is either missing in action or a prisoner of war but who never resided in the state to qualify if he/she is the sole survivor to qualify
- excludes active duty schooling, unless military schooling was in relation to an active enlistment, regular tour of duty, or normal military training as a National Guard/Reserve citizen-soldier

House Joint Resolution 7 also requires passage of companion bill, HB 3470, to become effective.