

Joint Committee on Ways and Means

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

Revenue: No revenue impact

Fiscal: Fiscal statement issued

Action: Do Pass

Vote:

House

Yeas: Buckley, D. Edwards, Galizio, Gilman, Kotek, Nathanson, Richardson, Shields

Nays:

Exc: Garrard, Hunt, Jenson. G. Smith

Senate

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

Nays:

Exc: Bates, Carter

Prepared By: Kim To, Legislative Fiscal Office

Meeting Date: June 5, 2009

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Senate Bill 700 creates a nine-member Task Force on Veterans' Reintegration to develop and design continuing regional programs to help returning soldiers adjust to civilian life. The Task Force will address issues such as healthcare, education, family and employment. The Task Force is instructed to report its findings and recommendations to the Governor by October 1, 2010. The Task Force must consult with federal, state county and local entities. The Task Force will sunset on the date of the convening of the next regular legislative session.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Minimal Fiscal

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT: No amendment.

BACKGROUND: Reintegration refers to the process faced by a returning soldier to civilian life, addressing issues such as healthcare, education, family, and employment. Most of Oregon's reintegration issues concern National Guardsmen and returning service members who have separated from active duty. The first alert of the need for a reintegration effort came from military family members coping with the absence of loved ones and the associated fears of returning to civilian life. The alert became alarms as injured soldiers returned home with both visible and invisible wounds. A few of these soldiers coalesced into a group that requested a formalized effort on the part of the National Guard to address their needs. The team familiarized themselves with all resources, created a website, an toll-free telephone number, and divided the state up into regions to ensure the returning soldiers' needs regarding ease of reintegration were being met.

Senate Bill 700 builds on the work of these soldiers by creating a task force to address the pressing issues facing returning veterans. Members of the task force will represent the Legislative Assembly, departments of Human Services, Employment, Veterans Affairs, Housing and Community Services, the Oregon University System, Community College and Workforce Development, the military, the Association of Oregon counties, the League of Oregon Cities, and regional council of governments. Members of the task for will not be entitled to compensation or reimbursement for expenses, and will serve as volunteers to the task force.