

REVENUE: No revenue impact

FISCAL: Minimal fiscal impact, no statement issued

Action: Do Pass
Vote: 5 - 0 - 1
Yeas: Boone, Huffman, Matthews, Esquivel, Witt
Nays: 0
Exc.: Parrish
Prepared By: Jill Petty, Administrator
Meeting Dates: 3/15, 3/22

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Directs Oregon Military Department to report on military cultural barriers to successful reintegration and recommend legislation for eliminating barriers by October 1, 2014.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Entire chain of command needs to promote veterans seeking help
- Suicide is number one cause of death for Oregon veterans ages 18-24
- Veterans need to continue to receive attention and care after wars end

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT: No amendment.

BACKGROUND: The 2009 Legislature passed Senate Bill 700 which created a Task Force on Veterans' Reintegration (Task Force) to submit recommendations to the Legislature. The Task Force notes as many as 40 percent of returning Iraq and Afghanistan veterans had some level of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, anxiety, depression or other emotional/mental condition. The Task Force found the characteristics that the military culture promotes, such as, strength and teamwork, work against veterans when it comes to seeking help. According to the Task Force many veterans do not seek reintegration help because they see needing help as a weakness. House Bill 3500 arose out of the work by the Task Force to require the Oregon Military Department to address this problem and propose solutions.