

REVENUE: No revenue impact

FISCAL: Minimal fiscal impact, no statement issued

Action: Do Pass
Vote: 4 - 0 - 1
Yeas: Beyer, Burdick, Ferrioli, Rosenbaum
Nays: 0
Exc.: Atkinson
Prepared By: Erin Seiler, Administrator
Meeting Dates: 6/7, 6/9

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Directs Adjutant General to form commission of five individuals to develop and name medal to honor Oregon’s fallen military members. Directs that Commission membership, in addition to Adjutant General, be two Assistant Adjutant Generals and two veteran service officers. Directs Commission to present design to Governor, and, if design is approved, directs Governor to present proposed medal to 2013 Legislative Assembly for its approval.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Importance of honoring military members who have been killed in line of duty
- Support for gold star families
- Possible amendment

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT: No amendment.

BACKGROUND: House Bill 3658 calls for the development and naming of a medal only, not the development of criteria for awarding the medal, nor creation of the medal, nor awarding the medal. The Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs provides veteran service officers (VSOs) free-of-charge to assist veterans and their families with applying for benefits. State VSOs are also available in most counties or through National Service Organizations, such as the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and Vietnam Veterans of America. According to the Salem *Statesman Journal*, at least 113 members of the military with strong Oregon ties have died during service in Iraq and Afghanistan. The State of Ohio awards a similar recognition, as described in the following story from the Associated Press:

“COLUMBUS, Ohio, Wednesday Nov 10, 2010 — State lawmakers have honored 190 Ohio service members who have died in U.S. combat operations since the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. The Ohio General Assembly on Wednesday posthumously awarded 190 service members with the Ohio Military Medal of Distinction. The medal was created by law in 2009 to pay tribute to Ohioans who lost their lives fighting in overseas conflicts. The medals were the first to be handed out under the new law. Gov. Ted Strickland and state leaders presented the medals to the soldiers’ families at a ceremony several blocks away from the state Capitol.”