

REVENUE: No revenue impact

FISCAL: Fiscal statement issued

Action:	Do Pass and Be Referred to the Joint Committee on Ways and Means by prior reference
Vote:	4 - 0 - 0
Yeas:	Monnes Anderson, Olsen, President Courtney, Boquist
Nays:	0
Exc.:	0
Prepared By:	Lori Brocker, Administrator
Meeting Dates:	2/16, 4/6

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Appropriates money to Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs for purpose of assisting veterans who use wheelchairs with medical transportation. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Need for medical transport for veterans using wheelchairs
- Impact of current economic environment on measure
- Infusion of federal dollars into state through veterans' benefits
- Idaho voucher transportation plan

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT: No amendment.

BACKGROUND: The Legislative Task Force on Veterans' Transportation (2009) determined that many veterans using wheelchairs had limited access to adequate medical transportation. There is no dedicated transportation in Oregon for veterans who use wheelchairs, and the systems that exist often do not accommodate wheelchairs. Facilities within the United States Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans Health Administration (VA) have the ability to provide special transportation, but accessing that transportation can be a cumbersome process for veterans.

Senate Bill 280 is patterned after a voucher program developed by the Idaho Department of Veterans Affairs. The \$100,000 allocation in the measure would enable the Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs to establish a similar system, providing vouchers for medical transport for the hundreds of Oregon veterans using wheelchairs for mobility.