



# Oregon

John A. Kitzhaber, MD, Governor

Department of Veterans' Affairs

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## House Committee on Veterans Affairs

HB 4065

### Establishes Veterans Lottery Fund

Co-Chairs and Members of the Committee:

For the record, my name is Jim Willis and I am the Director of the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs. I am here today to provide information regarding HB 4065 which establishes a Veterans Lottery Fund and appropriates funds to ODVA for the purpose of educating, training and creating jobs for veterans.

The idea of lottery games funding veterans programs is not new. Some states have been very successful in generating revenue for veterans in their state in the form of veteran themed scratch-it tickets or raffles.

In January of this year, Lottery testified before this committee that the average revenue generated from scratch-it games in Oregon is \$325K and that raffles typically generate \$1.2 M.

ODVA currently has programs that provide services to veterans that directly impact veteran education, training and economic development including the Educational Assistance Program, Emergency Grant Program, the Campus Veteran Service Officer Program, the Small Business Repair Loan Program. Currently, only the Educational Assistance Program and Emergency Grant Program receive General Funding.

Over the last decade nearly 30,000 men and women from Oregon have served in the OEF/OIF conflicts. As the number of service members serving in war has increased dramatically for the first time since Vietnam, funding for programs once they return have not.

And, the wars are not finished. Thousands more service members will continue to return to Oregon. Thousands more will need assistance through their transition back into civilian life.

From the beginning of the conflicts, Oregon has been at the forefront of veterans issues and policies. The 2008 Final Report of the Governor's Task Force on Veterans' Services identified the crux of veterans' issues in Oregon and clear recommendations to fix them.

One of the key findings of the task force was that "new" veterans were not engaging the state for benefits and services. To help deliver education, training, employment and benefits, we needed to meet the veterans where they were – at the colleges.



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This finding became a reality in 2009 with the highly successful Campus Veteran Service Officer Program. The program helped increase federal GI Bill dollars coming into the state by 90.5%, totaling \$87,903,000 in 2010. 1,364 disability claims were filed and 1,540 veterans began receiving their Post 9/11 GI bill. In 2011, this program was eliminated due to lack of general funding.

Thank you for hearing this information and I am happy to answer any questions.