

HB 2158 Veterans In State Tuition

Testimony by Mark San Souci, 26 March 2013, Oregon House Veterans' Services & Emergency Preparedness Committee

Chair Matthews and committee, on behalf of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, thank you for the opportunity to discuss and to express Department of Defense support for HB 2158 in an effort to 'Allows nonresident veterans discharged under other than dishonorable conditions to pay tuition and fees at Oregon resident rates.'

My name is Mark San Souci, Department of Defense Regional Liaison for Military Families for the Northwest, working for the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Family & Community Policy. I am sorry I cannot be with you today to offer this in person.

Thank you for your continued support of this issue, and since you've afforded me the chance to testify on this three times already (September 12, 2012, December 12, 2012, and February 26, 2013), I have not much more of value to add to my previous testimony. We concur with all amendments made to this date, and appreciate committee movement forward with HB 2158.

As of last week, when the State of Virginia enacted legislation resembling HB 2158, there are now 20 states allowing new veterans receiving the Post 9-11 GI Bill to pay in state tuition rates in the first year of study. And as of today, 15 other states besides Oregon also have similar bills in their legislatures.

Clearly, military veterans face huge challenges today to transition back into what we would hope to be productive in civilian society and successful lifestyle. We believe this measure to help with the educational transition aids greatly in the transition. HB 2158 will help

level the playing field for our veterans so they can meet their family's financial needs while continuing the educational opportunities so needed for a successful transition.

In closing, we are grateful for the tremendous effort that Oregon has historically provided in supporting our service members and their families, including the veterans academic and occupational credit bill last year and the others before that.

I wish to thank this committee for taking up this measure, and appreciate that you have been a champion for us for many years. I apologize for not being able to make this hearing in person, and expect to make it next time!

//s//

MARK B. SAN SOUCI

Northwest Regional State Liaison (WA, AK, ID, OR)

Defense State Liaison Office

Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense

(Military Community and Family Policy)

571-309-4622 or 253-273-2214

www.USA4MilitaryFamilies.org

Mark.SanSouci@osd.mil