

**Testimony by Mark San Souci, 23 May 2013, Oregon Senate
Committee on Veterans and Emergency Preparedness**

Chair Boquist 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 'Allow nonresident veterans discharged under honorable 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 wish to express our heartfelt appreciation to you and the work group – including the university system - for putting together an acceptable version of this measure that will negate fiscal concerns and still provide veterans with the 'in state' tuition rates when they move to Oregon to attend the fine public colleges and universities in this state.

Thanks to Cheyenne Ross, your counsel, for explaining the various amendments you have worked through to hopefully suit all parties. We support Amendment 12 (and its successor if there is one), with its variances, and appreciate the diligence and dedication required to work through them.

Ultimately, the Defense State Liaison Office objective on this Key Issue is that a new veteran who has served our Nation valiantly and fought for all 50 states has the opportunity to transition to civilian society by continuing higher education in a state where suitability of the degree program overrides that first year cost, and by not having to pay out of

pocket the difference between Post 9-11 GI Bill payment at 'in state' rates, and out of state rates that first year, even with Oregon's already generous splitting the difference rate in place. This is accomplished with HB 2158.

Now that Virginia, Indiana, and Maryland have passed similar measures into law this session, and Missouri Governor Nixon has this bill on his desk, we will have 23 states offering this benefit, and welcome and appreciate having Oregon join these other states in aiding our veteran heroes.

In closing, we are grateful for the tremendous effort that Oregon has historically provided in supporting our service members and their families, including the military spouse license portability House Bill 2037 also being taken up by this committee. I wish to thank this committee for taking up this measure, and know that you have been a champion for us for many years. I stand for any questions.

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