



PETER COURTNEY
President of the Senate

Senate Veterans' and Military Affairs Committee

Senator Brian Boquist, Chair
Senator Laurie Monnes Anderson, Vice-Chair
Senator Alan Olsen

*TESTIMONY BY SENATOR PETER COURTNEY
SUPPORTING SB 1
FEBRUARY 7, 2013*

My name is Peter Courtney. I live at 2925 Island View Drive NE here in Salem. Chair Boquist, members of the committee, thank you for hearing my testimony today.

I am here to testify in support of Senate Bill 1 which seeks to rectify the contradiction of having a holiday that honors veterans, yet some veterans do not have the option of taking the day off.

On November 11, 2010, Veterans' Day, I went to the 76 gas station near my house to get my morning coffee. Lucy was working that morning and we started talking about Veterans' Day. During the conversation, she asked me a question that I couldn't answer: "If it's Veterans' Day, how come veterans don't get the day off?"

Lucy then told me about her late husband, Steven, and her husband Daniel. Both are veterans and neither have ever had the day off. The story she told me is the reason I sponsored this bill in 2011 and the reason I'm sponsoring it now. If approved, Oregon would not be the first state to enact such a law. Iowa enacted similar legislation in 2010, now Iowa statute 91A.5A.

This bill simply seeks to give veterans a holiday on Veterans' Day. Veterans who want the day off would be required to make a request in advance and provide documentation proving their veteran status.

Please note, we have worked with the business community to address their concerns and have amended the bill significantly to give discretion and flexibility to the employer. As such, the bill allows employers to decide whether the day off is paid or unpaid. Furthermore, it allows employers to deny the request altogether if the

employee/veteran's absence will cause a "significant economic or operational disruption" to the business, and most importantly, it allows flexibility – if Veterans' Day isn't convenient for the employer, he or she can offer the veteran a different day off.

Giving our nation's service men and women "their day" off is a special way of saying thank you. Our veterans risked their own lives and limbs to protect our way of life. To honor their service in this way is the least we can do.

I asked several veterans to tell their stories here today. I ask that you listen and I sincerely hope that you'll support this bill.

I thank you respectfully.