

REVENUE: No revenue impact

FISCAL: Fiscal statement issued

Action: Do Pass
Vote: 7 - 0 - 0
Yeas: Boone, Esquivel, Fagan, Huffman, Parrish, Witt, Matthews
Nays: 0
Exc.: 0
Prepared By: Elizabeth Edwards, Administrator
Meeting Dates: 2/12, 2/19

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Instructs Oregon Department of Human Services Director (DHS) to share names and addresses of service members and veterans with Oregon Department of Veterans’ Affairs Director (ODVA) on monthly basis when service members or veterans make written inquiry of DHS regarding certain benefits. Requires service member or veteran’s written authorization to release name and address to ODVA. Authorizes DHS to adopt rules, in consultation with ODVA, regarding method of implementing notification procedure.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Specifics of how program will be implemented and incorporated into DHS’s existing modernization project
- Importance of identifying veterans and helping them access benefits
- Helping veterans access benefits brings in federal dollars to Oregon
- Only 27 percent of veterans use benefits
- ODVA’s mission to reach out to veterans accomplished in part through strategic agency partnerships

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT: No amendment.

BACKGROUND: Oregon presently has 330,000 veterans, of which around 100,000 are receiving benefits. These veterans have received approximately \$1.9 billion in benefits annually. ODVA estimates that at least 100,000 of the 230,000 veterans currently not receiving benefits could qualify for an additional \$1.5 to \$2 billion in federal aid. A major hurdle to accessing these federal dollars is identifying and contacting veterans who qualify for assistance. DHS interacts with 1.3 million Oregonians annually, approximately 800,000 of whom are adults. The particular benefits triggering the request to share information with the ODVA under House Bill 2422 are targeted at the adult population served by DHS.

The 2012 Oregon Legislature enacted House Bill 4064, which directed the Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI) to inquire of individuals seeking services from BOLI about their veteran status and share that information with ODVA. This program was termed the “No Wrong Door Policy.” House Bill 4064, upon which this bill is based, led to approximately 70 veterans being identified and connected with ODVA. House Bill 2422 facilitates the sharing of information between ODVA and DHS in order to identify service members and veterans who may be eligible to receive benefits.