

## **HB 4021: Veteran 'In State' Resident Tuition for Graduate Students**

### **Testimony by Mark San Souci, 4 February 2014, Oregon House Veterans Services and Emergency Preparedness Committee**

Chair Matthews and committee, on behalf of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, thank you for the opportunity to express Department of Defense support for HB 4021 in an effort to add graduate students to ORS 352.375 to enable them to pay tuition and fees at resident rates. We wish to thank you, Mr. Chair, and to Representatives Fagan and Parrish for sponsoring.

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.

We wish to express our heartfelt appreciation to you and this committee for passing HB 2158/SB 820 last year to cover undergraduates.

Having observed this committee's Work Session on the new law implementation in November 2013, it was outstanding to note the testimony given that **75 enrolled students** were able to take advantage of the September 15, 2013 effective date!

We want you to know that including Oregon, **28 states** are now providing the resident rate to new veterans who transition out of military service.

As of this week, **9 additional states** have legislation to consider offering this benefit.

Transitioning veterans into civilian life after military service remains the Number One issue of the Department of Defense, State Liaison Office.

Unemployment Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics report of 2013 Annual Averages indicated that unemployment of 18-24 year old

veterans was **21.4%**, **versus 14.3% for non-vets**. The 25-34 year old cohort stood at **9.1%**, **versus 7.3% for non-vets**.

As you know, the relationship between higher education and employment and careers is obvious. We think your passage of HB 4021 will aid in this effort.

In closing, we are grateful for the tremendous effort that Oregon has historically provided in supporting our service members, veterans, and their families.

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 apologize for not being there in person this time.

If you have any questions I can endeavor to find answers.

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**MARK B. SAN SOUCI**

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