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Sent: 2/3/2014 4:01:08 P.M. Pacific Standard Time
Subj: HB-4023 - A Lottery to Benefit Veterans' Education and Economic Development

Legislators and VFW and Blueback Comrades: (All BCC)

Request you oppose HB-4023. Veterans should not and do not need to rely on gambling proceeds for benefits. Moreover, society has enough problems with problem gamblers and those with gambling addiction without exploiting these citizens and their families for the benefit of veterans.

I assume that current lottery funds are spent wisely for good purposes. I further assume that sensible families are already spending what they can afford on the lottery. Any amount these families divert to a veterans lottery is a loss to presumably a good cause - a zero sum game. However, problem or addicted gamblers could and perhaps would take a chance on this additional lottery too, to the further detriment of the welfare of themselves and their families. As will be indicated below, this lottery is not needed and this veteran suggests it should go no further.

More significantly and relevantly, much if not all that these gambling proceeds would pay for is already available to veterans. Business loans and extensive education resources are available to veterans through the US Veterans Administration and the US Small Business Administration. For the VA log on www.va.gov/OSDBU.

For the Small Business Administration log on www.sba.gov. There you will find many web sites discussing the many SBA programs available to veterans. For example: for local assistance log on www.sba.gov/content/veterans-business-outreach-centers-0. Click on Find Resources on right of screen and you will find 33 centers dispersed throughout Oregon devoted to assisting veterans. SBA's Portland Regional Office may be visited at www.sba.gov/about-offices-content/2213140#. There one may find all sorts of information and/or links to Lenders and Mentors and Counselors. Other web sites among several which are designed to direct veterans to assistance are www.sba.gov/veterans-and-military-families.

Another excellent website available to assist veterans is: www.bizcenter.org. Centers are available throughout Oregon to assist in the development and management of business.

Section 4 of HB-4023 prescribes that the Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development (CCWD) by rule shall provide for, or facilitate, the education and training of veterans, This function is already being provided by universities and community colleges. It is available to veterans via their GI Bill education benefits. HB-4023 offers nothing not already available to veterans. A separate lottery fund is not necessary for education.

Section 4 continues, the Community Colleges and Workforce Development by rule shall provide for, or facilitate,the creation of jobs for veterans and economic development opportunities that benefit veterans. If this capability exists within CCWD the legislature is remiss in not putting it to work long ago to benefit all citizens, not just veterans. And if it exists, this provision should be stripped out of HB-4023 and enacted ASAP for the benefit of all Oregonians. I suggest that it is not a function of CCWD to create jobs and economic opportunities, per se, and I would be surprised if the capability does exist within CCWD. If it does, put it to work for all. I'm waiting to see.

I suggest HB-4023 has served a useful purpose in causing a review and a laying out of all the SBA and VA benefits and assistance available to veterans in the starting and managing of a business. I further suggest that unfortunately many if not most veterans may not be aware of the benefits and assistance described above. For example, I don't believe you will read about any of them in ODVA publications.

With respect to informing veterans of what is available, I suggest House and Senate Veterans Committee could serve a useful purpose by encouraging the Governor to require ODVA to develop a paper outlining all the resources available to the veterans and their families in starting and managing a business. This paper to be distributed to all veterans organizations and distributed as an attachment to VETS NEWS. It is too late to ensure that veterans are fully informed. As indicated in the addressee line, I have distributed this email to comrades with the request they share the information re assistance available to veterans to start and manage a business, adding to the info where possible..

Robert H. Thornhill
Member VFW Post 1442
and Blueback Submariners