

**PRELIMINARY** STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

CARRIER:

Senate Committee on Veterans and Emergency Preparedness

**REVENUE: No revenue impact****FISCAL: May have fiscal impact, statement not yet issued****SUBSEQUENT REFERRAL TO: None****Action:****Vote:**

Yeas:

Nays:

Exc.:

**Prepared By:** Cheyenne Ross, Administrator**Meeting Dates:** 2/3

**WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:** Requires Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs (ODVA) report on "veterans courts" to interim legislative veterans committees by July 1, 2016. Specifies report contents. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

**ISSUES DISCUSSED:****EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT:**

**BACKGROUND:** There are many examples of specialized courts or dockets, both civil and criminal, such as probate courts, tax courts, juvenile courts, and family courts. Concentrating similar cases together may improve overall efficiency as well as outcomes, and may also help develop expertise among judges, attorneys, probation officers, court-appointees, service providers and others involved with case management. Specialized courts for veterans have evolved primarily to address veteran defendants in nonviolent criminal cases in a manner that is sensitive to the possibility of underlying issues related to military service. The model veterans court is entirely distinguishable from other specialized courts because of the presence of volunteer veterans to mentor and support the veterans who are charged with a crime. During the 2013 legislative session, the Assembly passed House Concurrent Resolution 24 to express support the establishment of veterans courts and to encourage veterans to volunteer as mentors.

Senate Bill 157 requires a report from the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs on the overall status of veterans courts in Oregon, the use of veterans courts in other states, costs and benefits, methods of measuring outcomes, and any recommendations.