

March 10, 2015

Sen. Brian Boquist, Chair
Senate Committee on Veterans and Emergency Preparedness
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE,
Salem, OR 97301

Subject: Testimony in Support of SB 92

Dear Chair Boquist and Members of the Committee,

I am Diane McKeel, Multnomah County Commissioner, and Chair of the Association of Oregon Counties Veterans Steering Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today and express my strong support for Senate Bill 92.

A key role of counties around the state is helping veterans access benefits that they have earned through their service. You have heard me testify before about the tremendous impact of County Veterans Service Officers, and I will continue to champion the work that our CVSOs do. Family services are another key area that we need to direct attention and resources to. When a soldier deploys, the family deploys. Furthermore, the struggles with reintegration are not limited to the service member who is returning from combat.

I believe it is critical that we develop the partnerships necessary to support military connected children. One of the first steps in doing so is collecting data so we can strategically build and strengthen these collaborations.

The Association of Oregon Counties has voted to support this legislation, and I see a real opportunity to use our relationships with Counties, ODVA, and the Oregon National Guard to provide training curriculum or any other resources that may be helpful for schools as we work together to support children with a parent in the military.

Diane McKeel