

**FULL COMMITTEE PONY**

**SB 5539**

**Department of Veterans' Affairs**

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SB 5539 is the budget bill for the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs. The Department's mission is to serve and honor veterans through leadership, advocacy and strong partnerships. The Transportation and Economic Development Subcommittee recommends a budget of \$412,288,678 total funds, and 86 positions.

The Subcommittee recommendation adds three full-time positions, which will accommodate demand for veterans' home loans; provide ongoing, enhanced training capabilities to county veteran service officers; and make permanent a Director of Aging Veterans' Services position established in the interim. Expenditure limitation is recommended for improvements to the agency's home loan information systems and for position reclassifications so that existing staff can be utilized to greatest effect. A permanent ongoing enhancement to the level of support for County Veteran Service Officers is recommended, funded with a combination of General Fund, and the redirection of funds currently used in the educational aid and emergency assistance programs. With this investment, County Veteran Service Officers are funded at \$500,000 above the 2015-17 current service level. Funding for a veterans' suicide intervention telephone hotline is also recommended to continue through the 2015-17 biennium. A technical adjustment to true up debt service with bond issuance was also made, and Federal Funds expenditure limitation in the amount of \$1 is recommended, to enable the agency to accommodate potential federal grant opportunities in the upcoming biennium.

The Transportation and Economic Development Subcommittee recommends SB 5539 be amended by the -1 amendment and be reported out do pass, as amended.