

STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Veterans and Emergency Preparedness

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: No Revenue Impact

Action Date: 04/14/15

Action: Do Pass And Refer To Ways And Means By Prior Reference.

Meeting Dates: 04/14

Vote:

Yeas: 3 - Boquist, Monnes Anderson, President Courtney

Exc: 1 - Olsen

Prepared By: Cheyenne Ross, Committee Administrator

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Creates Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Coordinator position at Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs (ODVA).

Describes qualifications and duties. Requires report to legislature by September 15, 2018. Specifies contents of report.

Appropriates General Fund dollars. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Support for intent of original measure, Senate Bill 691, but difficulty of actual implementation
- Existing process to re-evaluate military discharge
- Reasons for drafting and introducing new measure

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Current law generally bars persons dishonorably discharged from military service, from receiving a variety of federal and state benefits. Senate Bill 691 (2015) was introduced to create an exception to this general prohibition, for persons dishonorably discharged based solely on sexual orientation, to enable them to be eligible for at least state benefits. However, implementation of the measure posed administrative and programmatic difficulties, and its narrow relating clause prevented it from being appropriately amended.

Senate Bill 946 was introduced to replace Senate Bill 691, requiring a dedicated coordinator at the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs, to assist lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered persons seeking review of their discharge status or other assistance navigating veterans' benefits.