

**PAUL L. EVANS**  
**STATE REPRESENTATIVE**  
DISTRICT 20



February 16, 2016

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

House Committee on Rules  
Oregon House of Representatives  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Colleagues:

House Joint Resolution 202A would provide the voters of Oregon with an opportunity to set-aside 2% of Lottery Revenues for veterans' outreach and programming. The bill before you reflects an idea that has been discussed by members of both parties over the past several sessions: it is a tool for "unlocking" as much as \$4 Billion in federal benefits, compensation, health care, and services for our military families and veterans residing in each, every district throughout the State of Oregon. We have district-specific information available for your review.

This month, and throughout the past Legislative Sessions, the Oregon Legislature has passed resolutions honoring the sacrifice and service of fallen. And it is appropriate we do this. Words matter. But so do deeds. This measure takes care of the living. At present it is estimated that more than 350,000 veterans reside in our cities, towns, and rural areas. Of these 350,000 the US Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA) provides services for less than 100,000. We have become largely immune to the almost regular reports of abuse and malfeasance within our federal VA programming. Each of us knows that our nation has failed to keep faith with the men and women sent into Harm's Way on our behalf. And yet, the past doesn't have to be prelude: we can change our course.

Let's be clear: the State of Oregon cannot afford to provide the care our veterans deserve, nor should try. In an era of tight budgets we are duty-bound to target the vast majority of our scarce general funds upon our Constitutional responsibilities. However, we can – and must – play a role. We can leverage available federal resources to engage veterans; to facilitate partnerships for at-risk populations; and to assist our military families in navigating the byzantine structures and systems of the modern VA. The purpose of HJR 202A is to unlock the \$Billions we "leave on the table" annually. It is a smart economic development investment; it is a smart investment in expanded human services capabilities (through transfer of clients/patients onto VA care); and it is the right thing to do for the families who have done so much for us.

With a targeted plan for optimizing outreach and assisting local and community service providers in securing available VA funds for employment, health care, housing, and transportation – we can stretch the anticipated revenues associated with passage of this measure (and its passage at the ballot) and make a profound difference in the health, opportunities, and lives of hundreds of thousands of military families. Every now and again what we do in this building facilitates the beginning of something big, something important: this is one such instance.

Your support for HJR 202A is critical. Every member of the House Veterans' and Emergency Preparedness Committee – Democrat and Republican alike – are co-signers on this measure. It is an idea whose time has come. Together we can send an important signal to veterans past, present, and future with a loud, unanimous "yes" for this measure. I ask you to consider what we have asked of the men and women we sent, and to support this measure today – and at the ballot box in the fall.

Respectfully,

Paul L. Evans  
State Representative