

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



## HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

February 26, 2016

Committee on Finance and Revenue  
Oregon State Senate  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, Oregon 97301

Chair Hass, Vice-Chair Boquist, and Committee:

Thank you for considering House Joint Resolution 202A. This legislation will provide the voters of our state with an opportunity to make the most consequential investment in veterans outreach and services in Oregon History. The materials and testimony presented in today's hearing reflect a perspective that embraces this approach – a permanent percentage of the Oregon Lottery – as both instrument and ornament: a significant mechanism for unlocking \$ Billions in available “left on the table” federal assistance, care, and services – and a lasting symbol to the men and women who have served our nation and continue to carry the costs of that service in their everyday lives.

The slides will share the story of how we can target limited resources on outreach that brings back direct as well as indirect federal dollars into every neighborhood in Oregon. The primary challenge is that the United States Veterans Affairs (USDVA) was built to thwart benefits, compensation, and health care payments. It is a bureaucracy designed to frustrate eligibility for earned services: veterans are required to make a claim against the US Government to demonstrate the validity of “damages.” Not surprisingly, the USDVA has a culture of obfuscation and technicalities. Our plan is to help Oregon veterans better navigate the structures and systems of the USDVA to claim earned assistance: we have a solid track record of doing this, but we need significantly more resources to reach the estimated 250,000 veterans who remain “outside” the VA system.

To demonstrate the reach of this programming it may be helpful to consider your own communities:

Senate District	Total Veterans	Female Veterans	Veteran Population
2	14,236	987	14%
7	10,177	642	10%
12	11,335	785	12%
14	7,656	549	8%
15	7,386	378	8%

\*\* Estimated (US Census)

Our primary intention with this referral is to set-aside resources that help us reach the remaining 2/3 of the veterans we know live in our communities: we know that with a well-implemented program we can duplicate the success of states such as Oklahoma – a state with a comparable number of veterans – a state that annually captures at least \$500 million more in federal assistance because more of their veterans are “in the VA system.” Together we can find useful models for improving homelessness among veterans, improve student veteran completion rates for apprenticeships and college degrees, and provide real-time assistance for veterans with mental health and other urgent care needs.

We ask for your support of this measure at the 2% level. If you should move it at the 1.5% level we ask that a clear statement of intention be made for the record that the 1.5% set-aside would be for programming above the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs (ODVA) current service level for 2015-2017. As you know, every member of the House Veterans' and Emergency Preparedness Committee – Democrat and Republican alike – are co-signers on 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

