

FISCAL IMPACT OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION

Measure: SB 80

79th Oregon Legislative Assembly – 2017 Regular Session
Legislative Fiscal Office

*Only Impacts on Original or Engrossed
Versions are Considered Official*

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Measure Description:

Directs Director of Veterans' Affairs to provide aid and assistance to federally recognized Indian tribes in Oregon with regard to programs of service for Native American veterans and accreditation of federal tribal veterans representatives.

Government Unit(s) Affected:

Department of Veterans' Affairs

Analysis:

The bill directs the Director of Veterans' Affairs to provide aid and assistance to federally recognized Indian tribes in Oregon. In particular, support should be provided with regard to programs of service for Native American veterans overseen by the tribes, and accreditation of tribal veterans representatives by the Office of General Counsel in the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

The fiscal impact of this measure is indeterminate because the Legislative Fiscal Office (LFO) finds the programmatic language, and therefore budgetary scope, of the bill to be ambiguous. While the Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs (ODVA) already has broad statutory authority to aid veterans' organizations and counties serving veterans, which does include tribal veterans; this legislation could be interpreted as directing the agency to elevate resources to federally recognized Indian tribes beyond what is currently provided by the ODVA. Such resources could include additional grant funding for Tribal Veteran's Representatives (TVRs), increased outreach and workload that may eventually require a tribal coordinator position, or perhaps the creation of a veterans service model for tribes, which is similar to the county veterans service funding model.

However, the ODVA reports that the activities required by this legislation, as envisioned by the Department, including training for TVRs, outreach, and claims and appeals assistance can be absorbed within existing parameters of the agency budget. TVRs will be included in currently existing annual and regional County Veterans Service Officers and National Service Organization trainings. ODVA has not requested, and does not anticipate, additional funding being required to directly support tribal programs.