

PAUL L. EVANS
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
DISTRICT 20



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

June 15, 2017

Senator Betsy Johnson, Co-Chair
Representative David Gomberg, Co-Chair
Joint Sub-Committee on Transportation and Economic Development
Joint Committee on Ways & Means
79th Legislative Assembly
Oregon State Capitol
Salem, Oregon 97301

Ref: HB 2891A, 2908, 5039, and SB 143B

Co-Chairs Johnson and Gomberg, and Members of the Sub-Committee:

As the Chair of the House Committee on Veterans' and Emergency Preparedness I ask for your support for House Bills 2891A, 2908, 5039, and Senate Bill 143B at or above the funding levels identified. These four measures were passed by a unanimous vote (of those present) – from a committee comprised of equal members of our respective parties. As a package, they reflect critical elements of an integrated approach for significantly enhancing veterans' outreach and services (direct as well as indirect).

It is our hope that you will soon consider House Bills 2690 and 3174 (new programs emphasizing education and professional training), as well as support ongoing efforts to expand veterans' housing resources through a moderate increase in the "document recording fee." It appears a deal on a moderate increase may be close; many of us hope this is the case because we know the embedded 25% set-aside for veterans' housing within the fee has already made a profound difference in the lives of veterans throughout the State of Oregon.

I want to take this opportunity to tell you how much I appreciate your hard work in scouring budgets and identifying available funding for the challenges we face. Given the likely \$1.4 Billion difference in state general funds from what would have been existing service level/s and our anticipated revenues for the 2017-2019 Biennium it would have been easier to accept the draft framework numbers and move onto other issues. But you did not do that: you have been diligent in seeking out ways to keep faith with the voters. When 84% of Oregonians stood for veterans (through passage of Ballot Measure 96 in 2016), you – and your peers – listened and acted.

Over the course of the next few weeks I hope we can recognize that this baseline funding for veterans' outreach and support is a "win" for Oregon – veterans and non-veterans alike. And while I, in fact the whole committee, hope (and will work for) even more funds may be added to this baseline as we consider a "revenue package," there can be little doubt that your work has transformed the relationship between the State of Oregon and the men and women we have sent, continue to send, and will send into Harm's Way.

Thank you for your consideration on this matter. Whatever else may be said of the 79th Legislative Assembly, nobody who understands the history of veterans' funding in Oregon can deny the fundamental shift that your work has begun. Please let me know if there are questions I may be able to answer or additional information needed for your decision.

Respectfully,

Paul L. Evans
State Representative

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