



To: House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee
From: Reyn Leno, Chair, Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde
Date: February 9, 2017
Subject: Please Support House Bill 2405

Chair Clem, Vice-Chair McLain, Vice-Chair Sprenger, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Reyn Leno, I am Chairman of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde and a member of the Oregon Department of Veteran's Affairs Advisory Committee. Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak with you today.

Oregon is truly unique when it comes to the relationship between the state and the tribes. Together, we have done amazing things, from Governor Atiyeh and the creation of the Commission on Indian Services, to Governor Kitzhaber's Executive Order 96-30, and then passage of SB 770, which put into statute the government-to-government relationship. We should all be proud as Oregonians of the work done to solidify a strong bond between the state and the tribes.

The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde supports House Bill 2405, which would make funding assistance available to tribal governments for construction and restoration of memorials honoring veterans.

I would also like to urge the legislature to support the Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs and to utilize additional funding approved through Measure 96 above that which is currently budgeted. Veterans are underserved, more than two-thirds of the 350,000 veterans in Oregon are not receiving federal services and connecting to services is severely delayed.¹

As you may know, The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde has an agreement with the US Department of Veterans Affairs that allows the Tribe to serve Native veterans through the Tribal health clinic. By allowing Tribal clinics to provide health care to Native veterans, as well as be reimbursed for that care through the Department of Veterans Affairs, Tribes help Native veterans living in rural areas who cannot

¹ <http://www.wweek.com/news/2016/10/12/wws-november-2016-endorsements-state-measures/>

access or travel to the Veterans Affairs facilities in Portland, and whom in many cases prefer to be seen by a culturally sensitive provider.²

HB 2405 is a solid step in the right direction and we ask that you also help to create legislation that allows Oregon tribes to serve non-Native veterans who live in rural communities as either spouses or residents, but also face the same logistical problems in accessing health care.

In closing, CTGR encourages continued support for HB2405 and for all Oregon's veterans and asks that you please prioritize programs that support Native and non-Native veterans and ensure that veterans programs are adequately funded.

Thank you.

² <http://www.grandronde.org/news/smoke-signals/2015/07/14/tribe-hosts-third-native-veterans-summit/#sthash.x3mt0YQA.dpbs>