

Jason S. Brewer
2240 NE Blackfoot Ct
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HB 2220
Testimony
February 8, 2017

Dear Chair Reardon and Honorable Members,

My name is Jason Brewer, a Veteran of the Iraq war having deployed in 2004-05 with G-TRP 82 CAV Oregon Army National Guard from Redmond, Oregon.

I have a close friend, Michael Shatto (Mike) whom not only deployed with me but who I have known since we were children. In high school, Mike struggled as some do, and ended up dropping out and attaining his General Education Diploma (GED) we lost touch around this time. Five years later Mike and I found ourselves in the same National Guard unit ready to deploy.

Fast forward about 10 years Mike and I had both gotten civilian jobs at the same National Guard maintenance facility in Redmond where concurrent membership in the National Guard was a condition of employment. We both experience different levels of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) from our Deployment(s) and Mike finds himself in a position where the National Guard medically retires him due to PTSD thusly retiring him from his civilian job. Mike has earned post-secondary credits through his service but still has a GED which unfortunately there is still a stigma.

I like to keep myself apprised of the State and Federal benefits available to us as veterans and I remember reading somewhere that there is an old law ORS.332.114 that allows Veterans to petition their former high school to receive a diploma as long as they meet certain criteria. Mike met all of those criteria except one and it said "Did not graduate from a high school because the person was serving in the Armed Forces of the United States" I believe that the wording in that excerpt is archaic and of a time where people were pulled from high school and drafted into the armed forces so should be changed or omitted. Which led me to getting in touch with Representative Whisnant who completely agreed with me and has led to this testimony.

Thank you for your consideration,

Jason Brewer

