

HB 2220 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY
House Committee On Higher Education and Workforce Development

Carrier: Rep. Whisnant

Action Date: 02/21/17
Action: Do Pass.
Vote: 9-0-0-0
Yeas: 9 - Alonso Leon, Bynum, Clem, Heard, Johnson, Reardon, Reschke, Sollman, Whisnant
Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued
Revenue: No revenue impact
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WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Modifies school district criteria for issuing high school diplomas to veterans by removing requirement that veterans did not graduate from high school due to service in the Armed Forces, and requirement that veterans must have received General Educational Development (GED) certificate, post-secondary degree or minimum score on Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB).

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Employment barriers for older veterans
- GED certificates can hinder veteran access to job opportunities and promotions
- Examples of employers who cannot hire veterans due to company policies requiring possession of a high school diploma
- Current high school diploma requirement for Armed Forces enlistment

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Under current law (ORS 332.114), Oregon school districts issue high school diplomas upon request to veterans who meet certain qualifications, including: 1) the individual attended a high school prior to service in the Armed Forces, 2) the individual did not graduate high school due to service in the Armed Forces, 3) the individual was discharged or released under honorable conditions, 4) the individual served in the Armed Forces during specified wars or conflicts, and 5) the individual has received a General Educational Development (GED) certificate, post-secondary degree, or minimum score on Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB).

Since the mid-1960s, the United States Armed Forces has considered an applicant's educational level in making enlistment decisions. Currently, all recruits must take the ASVAB test, and 90% of enlistees possess a high school diploma, or at least 15 college credits. The minimum education requirement for enlistment is a GED. Consequently, the language in House Bill 2220 that eliminates GED, post-secondary degree or ASVAB score requirements largely pertains to older veterans. The Oregon Department of Education reports that the primary problem this bill seeks to address is the challenge older veterans face in accessing job opportunities and promotions that require a high school diploma.