

HB 2690 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Veterans and Emergency Preparedness

Action Date: 04/13/17

Action: Do pass and be referred to Ways and Means by prior reference

Vote: 7-0-1-0

Yeas: 7 - Esquivel, Evans, Lewis, Lively, Meek, Parrish, Post

Exc: 1 - Boone

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: Has minimal revenue impact

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WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Establishes the Oregon Educational and Workforce Development Bridge Loan Program in the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs (ODVA) to conduct outreach and provide forgivable loans to veterans enrolled in approved educational and training programs to cover gaps in other financial assistance. Requires veteran to be eligible to receive other aid that has not yet commenced, has been delayed or suspended, or is temporarily unavailable. Provides for loan forgiveness upon completion of program. Requires repayment if veteran fails to complete program. Authorizes up to \$5000 for up to three months in a five-year period. Creates accounting structures, including the Oregon Educational and Workforce Development Bridge Loan Program Fund and the Veterans' Educational Aid Account, to receive legislative appropriations, loan repayments, interest, and any other moneys.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Gaps in existing programs such as the Post 9/11 GI Bill

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Various programs exist to assist veterans with educational opportunities, including the Montgomery GI Bill and the Post-9/11 GI Bill which came into effect on August 1, 2009. Under the Post 9/11 GI Bill, student veterans who served at least 30 days of continuous active duty after September 10, 2001, and were honorably discharged with a service-connected disability, or who served an aggregate of 90 days of credible active duty, can receive tuition and fees paid directly to the school; a housing allowance; and an annual book stipend of up to \$1000. Full benefits are not paid unless the veteran has served at least 36 months of creditable active duty service, and those who served less than 36 months receive benefits on a sliding scale. Reservists and National Guard members are also eligible for benefits based on an aggregate of creditable active-duty service points.

House Bill 2690 creates the Oregon Educational and Workforce Development Bridge Loan Program to bridge gaps between the GI Bill and/or other educational assistance for which veterans are eligible, when the other assistance is temporarily unavailable.