

HB 3319 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: No revenue impact

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WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Appropriates moneys to the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs (ODVA) in each biennium equal to the total appropriation in the 2015-2017 biennium, adjusted for inflation and separate from lottery funds. Requires three-fifths vote of the Legislative Assembly to appropriate less.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Funding levels for ODVA operations
- Voters' approval of Ballot Measure 96
- Three-fifths vote requirement for downward departure

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

The ODVA is currently funded from several sources consisting of the General Fund, Other Funds, Other Funds (Nonlimited) and Federal Funds. It administers three primary program areas that are supported by its core operations: the Veterans' Loan Program, the Veterans' Services Program, and the Veterans' Home Program. The Veterans' Loan Program, funded entirely with Other Funds, provides home loans to veterans. Other Funds revenues for the program are derived from the proceeds of bond sales, loan and contract repayments, fee and rental income, and investment earnings. The Veterans' Services Program provides claims and appeals assistance, conservatorship services, and partnerships with counties and national veterans' service organizations to assist veterans. The Veterans' Services Program is funded with General Fund and Other Funds primarily from conservatorship fees. The Veterans' Home Program operates two skilled nursing facilities in The Dalles and Lebanon. The operational costs of the facilities are funded with Other Funds from resident-related income, including funds from the U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA), Medicare, Medicaid, insurance companies and private payers.

On November 8, 2016, Oregon voters approved a potential new source of funding for ODVA and other service providers. Ballot Measure 96 amended the state's constitution to dedicate 1.5 percent of net lottery proceeds to support veterans, effective July 1, 2017. Ballot Measure 96 specifies a variety of support for veterans, but does not dictate specific amounts or particular recipients of funds.

House Bill 3319 protects a minimum amount of funding for ODVA, by appropriating moneys in future biennia equal to the total appropriation in the 2015-2017 biennium, adjusted for inflation, and apart from potential lottery funds, and requiring a three-fifths vote of the Legislative Assembly to appropriate less.