

**SB 476 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY**

**Carrier:** Rep. Parrish

**House Committee On Veterans and Emergency Preparedness**

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**Action Date:** 05/25/17  
**Action:** Do Pass the A-Eng bill.  
**Vote:** 6-0-2-0  
**Yeas:** 6 - Esquivel, Evans, Lewis, Lively, Meek, Parrish  
**Exc:** 2 - Boone, Post  
**Fiscal:** Has minimal fiscal impact  
**Revenue:** No revenue impact  
**Prepared By:** Bradley Volk, LPRO Analyst

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**WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:**

Directs Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs (ODVA) Advisory Committee to recommend whether the Legislative Assembly should add disabled veterans to the definition of "preferred worker" so that employers may receive the same benefits for hiring them as are available for hiring permanently disabled injured workers, through the Reemployment Assistance Program. Requires recommendation by February 1, 2018. Sunsets December 31, 2018. Takes effect 91st day following adjournment *sine die*.

**ISSUES DISCUSSED:**

- Adding disabled veterans to definition of "preferred worker"
- Effect on ODVA workload

**EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:**

No amendment.

**BACKGROUND:**

The Department of Consumer and Business Services administers return-to-work programs in Oregon, including the Reemployment Assistance Program. The Reemployment Assistance Program includes two major programs: the Employer-at-Injury Program and the Preferred Worker Program (PWP). The PWP provides financial incentives to employers that hire "preferred workers," which are workers that are permanently disabled due to a compensable, on-the-job injury or occupational disease, who are unable to return to regular work. If an injured worker is hired as a preferred worker and has a new injury during the first three years of reemployment, the Reemployment Assistance Program pays for the claim, including the administrative costs. In addition, the PWP provides wage subsidies, direct employment purchases, and pays for worksite modifications.

Senate Bill 476 A requires the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs Advisory Committee to advise the Legislative Assembly by February 1, 2018, whether to add disabled veterans to the definition of "preferred worker" for purposes of Reemployment Assistance Programs, so that employers would receive the same benefits for hiring them as they would receive for hiring permanently disabled injured workers.