

SB 832 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Carrier: Rep. Lewis

House Committee On Veterans and Emergency Preparedness

Action Date: 05/30/17

Action: Do Pass the A-Eng bill.

Vote: 8-0-0-0

Yeas: 8 - Boone, Esquivel, Evans, Lewis, Lively, Meek, Parrish, Post

Fiscal: Has minimal fiscal impact

Revenue: No revenue impact

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WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Directs Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs (ODVA) Advisory Committee to advise Legislative Assembly by February 1, 2018, on merits of requiring ODVA to establish a grant program, in cooperation with the Veterans Health Administration Office of Rural Health, to solicit qualified nonprofit providers to assist rural veterans with access to health care, veterans' benefits, housing, transportation and court processes.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Need in rural areas
- Grant funding versus other funding
- Measure not in conflict with other similar measures in Ways and Means

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Veterans' health care benefits are provided through the federal Veterans Administration (VA). The main VA hospital facilities are located in population centers, which can negatively impact access to care for residents of rural areas. The Veterans Health Administration Office of Rural Health (ORH) exists to increase access for veterans in rural areas who rely on the VA for care. Programs like Veterans Choice have been implemented to address the needs of rural veterans, but criticisms persist, particularly with regard to eligibility requirements and administrative bureaucracy. Rural veterans overall, especially as they age, experience difficulty with access to all manner of assistance, not just access to health care.

Senate Bill 832 A requires the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs (ODVA) Advisory Committee to make recommendations to the Legislative Assembly by February 1, 2018, on the merits of requiring ODVA to establish a grant program, in cooperation with ORH, to solicit qualified nonprofit providers to assist rural veterans with access to health care, veterans' benefits, housing, transportation and court processes.