



**MARK MEEK**  
**STATE REPRESENTATIVE**  
DISTRICT 40

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

DATE: February 6, 2018  
TO: House Committee on Veterans and Emergency Preparedness  
FROM: Representative Mark Meek  
SUBJECT: HB 4098

Chair Evans and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 4098. HB 4098 seeks to expand the availability of apprenticeships to veterans in Oregon. I have been working closely with the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs on this concept and am proud of the bipartisan support that the bill has received thus far.

As a veteran, I know that we often face unique challenges when entering the civilian job market. The data shows this is especially true in Oregon: the unemployment rate for veterans in our state is more than 25 percent higher than the civilian population, and is more than 40 percent higher than the national unemployment rate for veterans across the United States, according to 2017 data from the Oregon Employment Department. Clearly we have room for improvement when it comes to employing veterans.

House Bill 4098 directs ODVA to do three things:

1. Develop and provide written materials about apprenticeship opportunities to veterans.
2. Share this information with the Oregon Employment Department, Military Department/National Guard, and Bureau of Labor and Industries, as well as county veteran service officers and veteran service organizations.
3. Provide annual trainings on apprenticeship programs and federal veteran's educational benefits to county VSO's and veteran service organizations

Apprenticeship programs provide great pathways to develop useful job skills, and they often lead to rewarding careers with good wages and strong benefits. House Bill 4098 is a practical step that we can take during this short legislative session to ensure that more veterans learn about these apprenticeship programs and the career pathways that they provide.

Respectfully,

  
Mark Meek

State Representative – Oregon House District 40

