

2/1/18

Re: Senate Bill 1557- Support

Senate Committee on Education,

I want to thank you for taking the time to consider this important issue.

As a former company level commander, I witnessed Soldiers dealing with this issue on a regular basis. Service to the Oregon National Guard often requires time commitments that have a tremendous impact on civilian life. It is our responsibility to ensure that higher education is attainable for our young men and women in service, without penalty based on the decision to serve.

Servicemembers should never have to choose between selflessly serving and furthering their education. All student/Soldiers with military requirements under 30 days should be covered by law and protected from all negative impacts regarding their education. The main argument I have heard is that Soldiers, Airmen, Sailors and Marines need to "plan ahead" and speak with their professors about service obligations. The problem is that not all events can be anticipated. Our Oregon National Guard frequently supports wildland fires and other domestic operations throughout the country. Soldiers consistently receive training and have continuing military education requirements which require anywhere from 1-29 days of their time. If there is no legal safeguard put in place, Soldiers will continue to be forced to choose between higher education or their military service.

This often leads to the unfortunate loss of quality servicemembers that not only want to serve but also want to better themselves. It would be a disservice to these bright, quality contributors to our society to not pass SB 1557. I again thank you for your consideration.

Very Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joseph Twigg', written over a horizontal line.

Joseph Twigg

503-330-0025