

SB 35 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Veterans and Emergency Preparedness

Prepared By: C. Ross, LPRO Analyst

Sub-Referral To: Senate Committee On Judiciary

Meeting Dates: 1/30

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Exempts Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs (ODVA) from requirement to include vouchers for disbursements as part of conservator's accounting filed with court. Lifts sunset on campus veteran resources grant program.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Senate Bill 35 impacts two unrelated programs at the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs (ODVA), each discussed in turn below: the conservatorship program and the grant program for campus veteran resources.

Conservators are appointed to manage the estates of protected persons: ODVA's conservatorship program operates on behalf of over 140 veterans. Conservators are required to provide financial information to courts on at least an annual basis, including an estate's prior balances, current values, property received, and disbursements made, among other things. Absent a court ruling to the contrary, vouchers for distributions (copies of checks) must accompany each accounting unless the conservator is a trust company in compliance with statutes that regulate Oregon trust businesses and financial institutions. If no vouchers are required, they must still be maintained along with other records, made available for inspection or copying by interested persons, and described as part of the annual accounting submitted to the court.

By law, the financial institution for ODVA's conservatorship program is the Oregon State Treasury, which pools all conservatorship client funds into one account, with no individual client statements. Copies of disbursement vouchers are sent to ODVA monthly, in digital form, saved to compact discs. These discs are searched to locate records by number that correspond with each of the client estates managed by ODVA, to accompany accountings filed with the court.

The grant program established by Senate Bill 143 (2017) has been used to expand and enhance campus veteran resource centers at public universities and community colleges. The current Governor's Budget would allocate \$700,000 to it; it is scheduled to sunset January 2, 2020.

Senate Bill 35 exempts the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs from having to include disbursement vouchers with annual financial accountings submitted to the court for estates administered under its conservatorship program, and lifts the sunset on campus veteran resource grants.