

**Paul L Evans**  
**STATE REPRESENTATIVE**  
**DISTRICT 20**



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

March 4, 2019

Representative Jeff Barker  
Chairman, Committee on Business & Labor  
Oregon House of Representatives  
Oregon Capitol Building  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, Oregon 97301

REF: House Bill 2886

Chairman Barker:

Thank you for scheduling House Bill 2886 (HB 2886) for a public hearing. This measure is the product of a workgroup formed by the House Committee on Veterans and Emergency Preparedness. Previous iterations of this measure have enjoyed bipartisan, near unanimous (at times unanimous) support from our committee. It was drafted with care – with the hopes (of many) to provide a product that represents the last time we consider this issue – at least for a while. Truth be told, we believed this issue had been resolved until very late in the 2018 Legislative Session. Unfortunately, circumstances have demonstrated a need for adjusting existing language to ensure both standardized interpretation as well as standardized execution of the law by employers.

HB 2886 is offered to provide certainty, equity, and fairness to the application of veterans' preference points for hiring and promotion practices. Existing policy has proven frustrating for employees as well as employers; current understanding of the law has perpetuated a challenging environment that warrants our attention. This measure, as drafted, clarifies the term veteran to reflect 21<sup>st</sup> Century realities of military service as well as the documents allowed to prove veteran status, identifies models for acceptable practices for meeting the intention of the original legislation, and it provides for a formal feedback process for veteran job seekers who are not successful in securing employment.

This measure is not a panacea, but it reflects a straightforward policy that seeks to balance the legitimate need for assisting returning veterans in finding employment with a reasonableness standard related to the timeframe hiring preferences should be applied. And given the upcoming deployment of over 1,600 Oregon National Guard (ONG) troops for overseas duties – it is critical we provide certainty in the hiring and promotion practices throughout the State of Oregon. We have about a year to get things in place; we have little time to spare.

Thank you again for your consideration of this measure. I hope it finds favor within the committee – and I hope we can have it passed and signed into law prior to the first (of the many to come) ONG mobilization ceremonies.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Paul L. Evans".

Paul L. Evans  
Oregon House of Representatives (HD 20)