

Dear Senator Prozanski and Members of the Committee,

I am sorry my schedule does not enable me to testify before the committee regarding SB 35.

As Chair of the Senate Veterans and Emergency Preparedness Committee, I am writing in support of SB 35 as amended by the committee. As originally drafted, this bill removed the sunset clause for the campus veterans grant program enabled by the passage of Ballot Measure 96 in 2016. We have maintained that provision in the bill and are looking forward to enabling the Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs to continue this vital program next biennium and into the future.

The committee also amended the bill to increase funding for this program – from \$700,000 during the current biennium to \$1.2 million for the 2019-21 biennium. (Had we not removed the sunset clause, there would have been no funding for this program next biennium.) We believe increased funding is important to the student veterans across all of Oregon's public universities and community colleges as they rely on these programs. It is worth noting that the lottery forecast for next biennium indicates there will be sufficient revenues to cover this increase.

We also amended the program to enable campuses to devote more of the allocation to hiring counsellors and other support personnel who are important in assuring success of veteran students while they are on campus.

I urge to support this bill.

Sincerely,

Senator Sen. Alan Olsen