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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

April 7, 2019

House Committee on Business & Labor
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Ref: HB 2886 Policy & Amendments

Dear Colleagues:

Thank you for your interest and potential support for passage of HB 2886. The drafted language will significantly improve the lives of veterans throughout the State of Oregon. The amendments offered can make those improvements even better. Accordingly, I write this letter to clarify the intentions of the amendments, as well as to correct a claim made in a letter we received this past weekend.

The amendments seek to accomplish the following:

- 1) Authorize language requiring public employers to accept documents beyond the standard DD Form 214 (US DoD Form of Discharge from Active Duty) for certain, and specific, cases including instances where a veteran is seeking post service employment but not yet separated from military service. There are specified documents available to be used to ensure both verification of honorable service, and a reasonable time from discharge (usually within one-hundred-twenty [120] days of separation).
- 2) Provide the committee with a policy choice related to the duration of hiring preference for veterans. As drafted, the bill establishes a ten (10) year timeframe for the state preference benefit. It was the result of a compromise; it prioritizes hiring of more recently discharged veterans. The compromise was a change from merely "points" based preference to a preference at every level of the selection process. That said, several representatives have asked if it makes sense to expand the timeframe, so an amendment is provided for that alternative should the committee choose it.

Over the weekend a letter was sent to all of us serving on the committee. While it brings light to the issue of preference duration, it incorrectly asserts that HB 2886 strips away the hiring preference for veterans at the endgame. It simply isn't true. The cited language is taken out of context. As drafted, this measure requires a state preference at each, every level of the hiring process up to the final selection; it further requires a letter to be provided to veteran applicants that were not selected for hire to provide them with a better understanding of areas for improvement. In simplest terms, state preference is to be applied at all steps in a process up to the final hiring decision – and when the veteran isn't hired – a letter explaining why must be produced. Please note: this state preference does not take away any federal preference factor; this is a supplemental preference.

In conclusion, I want to emphasize the original intention of the measure: to craft language improving the likelihood of veterans to earn person-to-person interview opportunities to explain a professional background (a resume) in context for future employers who may possess little to no experience with military function or occupations. It was never our intention to assert that veteran status, and only veteran status, is or should become the sole determinant in a public hiring selection process, but rather an important factor that should be weighed throughout the entirety of the process. An explanation to the unselected veteran job candidate can serve as a learning opportunity; it can be a tool for the veteran to utilize for improving respective competitiveness for future hiring environments.

Respectfully,