

February 19, 2020 (Representative Rick Lewis – Testimony HB 4083)

Chair Olsen, Vice-Chair Monnes Anderson and Senator Manning,

There are nearly 1,000 members of the armed forces of this country from Oregon who are still listed as missing in action, ranging from World War 1 to the present. Unfortunately, many will never be recovered or positively identified.

You will recall that in the 2019 Legislative Session, the Legislature passed HB 3452 which dedicated Highway 26 as the POW/MIA Memorial Highway. HB 4083 before you today is a logical continuation of the effort to recognize and honor those who were listed as Missing in Action or a formerly listed POW, whose remains have been positively identified, recovered and returned to Oregon. To date, seven of these individuals have been identified by the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency and returned home.

HB 4083 amends ORS 366.931 Section 1 to add to the eligibility for a roadside sign any individual killed in the line of duty who was formerly designated as either MIA or POW whose remains have been recovered, identified and returned to Oregon. Typically, these individuals are identified through DNA testing. The bill allows for surviving family to go directly to ODOT, pay the fee and obtain the roadside sign. There is no cost to the State or the taxpayers for these signs, but assistance will likely be provided to the family by veteran's service organizations.

HB 4083 passed unanimously out of the House Veterans and Emergency Preparedness Committee. It passed out of the House 52-0 with 8 excused.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.