



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

HB 2230 – Public Guardian and Conservator Services for Veterans

Background.

Currently, 54% of Oregon veterans are over age 65. Every night, 1,300 Oregon veterans sleep on the streets or in shelters. Often, the resources to help are available, just inaccessible. Veterans end up in the emergency rooms of our hospitals with mental health concerns. There, healthcare providers struggle to stabilize them because they can't make decisions for themselves and don't have family members who are able or willing to help. Oregon started a Public Guardianship (OPG) program in 2015 to care for people unable to care for themselves.

OPG will only intervene in cases where:

1. the lack of a guardian would present a **safety risk** to the protected person
2. **no less restrictive measures** would address that safety risk
3. the protected person **lacks funds** to pay a private guardian; and
4. **no friend or family member** will serve as the guardian.

OPG has not been as effective as we had hoped because of chronic understaffing to meet the need. Currently, they can only take the most extreme cases.

In 2016 Oregon voters overwhelmingly passed Measure 96 which dedicates 1.5% of net proceeds from the Oregon Lottery to funding support services for military veterans.

How HB 2230 Works.

This bill appropriates money from either the general fund, or the already allocated Measure 96 lottery funds for veterans, at the option of Ways & Means. It uses these funds to provide additional public guardian and conservator services to aid our aging homeless or mentally ill veterans.