

HB 2271 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans

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Sub-Referral To: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Meeting Dates: 2/7, 2/21

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Makes permanent the Veteran Educational Bridge Grant Program. Expands eligibility criteria for veterans to receive grants under the Program.

NOTE - measure has a subsequent referral to the Committee on Ways and Means

FIS:

RIS:

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Examples of veterans who have used the Bridge Grant program
- Situations where bridge grants may be used
- Funding for program

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

While there are a number of federal and state programs to assist veterans in furthering their education, either within the university system, through professional training, or as part of apprenticeship programs, there are still situations where a veteran may not currently qualify for assistance, leaving them unable to continue their educational training. In 2019, the Legislative Assembly enacted House Bill 2201, establishing the Veteran Educational Bridge Grant Program within the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs, to allow veterans to continue their course of study in a program where U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs educational benefits may be used. The Bridge Grant Program was originally set to sunset on January 2, 2022, but was extended to January 2, 2024 by House Bill 3011 (2021).

House Bill 2271 removes the sunset on and makes permanent the Veteran Educational Bridge Grant Program. The measure also expands eligibility to veterans seeking to study at licensed career schools, state-registered apprenticeship programs, or on-the-job training programs offered by public employers. Additionally, the measure expands eligibility to veterans facing inability to enroll due to previous overpayment of benefits or prior withdrawal.