

SB 884 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Veterans, Emergency Management, Federal and World Affairs

Action Date: 03/30/23

Action: Do pass with amendments. Refer to Tax Expenditures by prior reference and requesting referral to Ways and Means. (Printed A-Eng.)

Vote: 5-0-1-0

Yeas: 5 - Linthicum, Manning Jr, President Wagner, Thatcher, Woods

Exc: 1 - Gorsek

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: Revenue impact issued

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Meeting Dates: 3/9, 3/30

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Increases existing property tax exemptions for Oregon veterans with disabilities. Grants exemptions to and recodifies the definition of a "surviving spouse of a veteran." Takes effect on 91st following adjournment sine die.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- History of the current property tax exemption for disabled veterans
- "Service-connected" disability versus non-service connected disability
- Appreciation for the service of veterans

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

Removes provision that counties may adopt a resource that establishes a maximum amount of annual gross income that may be earned by a veteran or surviving spouse who qualify for the maximum exemption. Adds a new exemption that any veteran having a service-connected disability of 100 percent, or more than one service-related disability that equals 100 percent or more and meets the criteria of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs for unemployability; if the property taxes assessed on their property exceeds 14 percent of their taxable income for the preceding tax year, the property shall be 90 percent exempt the next property tax year. Requires county assessor to compute and list the value and amount of property taxes that would have been charged had the property not received the new exemption. Directs county assessor to certify these total amounts before October 15 of each year for submission to the Department of Veterans' Affairs. Directs department to reimburse, no later than November 15 of each year, the county treasury for the certified amount, less any discount provided under ORS 311.505. Extends new exemption to a surviving spouse prior to remarriage. Allows veterans who are certified by a duly licensed physician or naturopathic physician as having disabilities of 40 percent or more, be exempt from taxation not to exceed \$60,000 of the assessed value of their home, even if their total gross income is more than 185 percent of federal poverty guidelines.

BACKGROUND:

Property tax exemptions for disabled veterans have been part of Oregon law since 1921. Oregon Revised Statute 307.250 - 307.270 authorizes property tax exemptions for Oregon veterans with disabilities and their surviving spouses who are not remarried.

Senate Bill 884 A increases existing property tax exemption rates and creates a new exemption. The measure proposes increasing, from \$15,000 to \$60,000, the existing property tax exemption for veterans having disabilities of 40 percent or more. The current exemption is subject to a three percent increase each tax year. The measure also increases, from \$18,000 to \$65,000, the existing property tax exemption for having a service-related disability

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of at least 40 percent but less than 100 percent. The current exemption in state law is for veterans with a service-related disability of 40 percent or more, which is subject to a three percent increase each tax year. The measure proposes a new property tax exemption of up to \$150,000 for veterans who are officially certified as having a service-related disability of 100 percent, or who have more than one service-related disability whose combined ratings equal 100 percent. This section includes provisions for the surviving spouse of a veteran who died as a result of their service-related disability and allows counties to adopt ordinances that establish income limitations for exemption eligibility.

SB 884 A also recodifies that a “surviving spouse of a veteran” is a veteran’s surviving spouse who has not remarried, and updates current state law with this definition.