



# Oregon

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**DATE:** March 7, 2023

**TO:** House Committee on Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans

**FROM:** Jay DeFillipo, Legislative Director, Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs

**SUBJECT:** HB 3421 – Relating to the commemoration of military service members

Chair Grayber, Vice-Chair Lewis, Vice-Chair Tran, and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 3421. The recognition of our veterans and those who have served and sacrificed for our country is an important part of the mission of the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs.

Section 1. (1) of HB 3421 requires official ceremonies or other events held by the state government to commemorate Memorial Day or Veterans Day to be held on the legal holiday. Currently, ORS 187.010 states the specific dates of holidays including Veterans Day and Memorial Day.

ODVA has conducted its Veterans Day event on November 10<sup>th</sup> in 2021 and 2022. ODVA made the decision to celebrate Veterans Day on November 10<sup>th</sup> after much consideration about how the agency could reimagine the event to attract more attendees post-COVID. Since many towns and cities across the state hold their own Veterans Day events on Nov. 11, all starting at the traditional time of 11:00 a.m., moving ODVA's to Nov. 10 was seen as possibly enabling potential attendees and invited VIPs to attend both their local event and ODVA's statewide one. In 2021, in partnership with the Vietnam Veterans of America and the Vietnamese-American community, ODVA conducted an event that celebrated American veterans of that war together with many Vietnamese-American men

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who fought as soldiers in the Army of the Republic of Vietnam alongside U.S. counterparts. In 2022 ODVA took a similar approach to Veterans Day highlighting Korean War veterans. The decision to conduct the event on November 10<sup>th</sup> again in 2022 was because ODVA was fortunate enough to have the South Korean Consul General Eunji Seo traveling in the area that day. She graciously agreed to attend ODVA's event to speak of her family's plight during the Korean War and express appreciation to American servicemembers who fought and died in that conflict. ODVA assessed this speaker especially could draw a larger audience and allow us to amplify the theme of celebrating our Korean War veterans in particular.

Conducting a Veterans Day event on a date other than November 11th is not without precedent in Oregon. For instance, some communities will adjust their Veterans Day celebration if it falls on a Sunday. Albany, OR, which holds one of the largest parades in the state, held its 2018 Veterans Day Parade on Saturday, November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018 due to a long-standing decision to not hold Sunday parades.

Section 2. (1) of HB 3421 directs ODVA to “ensure that all state-owned or state-maintained veterans’ facilities, memorials for honoring veterans, and war memorials, except highways, are in clean condition and in good repair for Memorial Day, Veterans Day and any ceremony or other event that may be held” to commemorate those days. This broad language about state facilities and memorials could include the veterans’ living area of Snake River Correctional Institution (a state facility) and adjacent memorial; and campus veterans resource centers at state universities and community colleges, including OSU’s Memorial Union building, among others. ODVA maintains an inventory of state memorials, but it is only a partial list of veteran memorials across the state. This language would greatly expand ODVA’s responsibility to maintain memorials across the state as many are maintained by state, local, tribal, and private entities. As a result of the requirement, ODVA would need to do a comprehensive inventory of all facilities and war memorials



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described in Section 2. (1). Because of that activity and the anticipated need for expanded coordination to monitor, clean and repair them, ODVA will likely need an additional position and account for related additional fiscal impacts in order to perform this increased workload.

ODVA does not have a position on HB 3421. This testimony is to ensure the committee has the facts associated with this bill as they determine the bills way ahead.

Thank you for your consideration, and your continued support of Oregon veterans.

*Serving  
Oregon  
Veterans  
Since 1945*

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