



VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA
Oregon State Council

Testimony: HB 2146 A: Oregon Gold Star Families Memorial Highway on US Hwy 30

April 20, 2023

Thank you, Chair Manning, Vice-Chair Thatcher and committee members, for this opportunity to submit testimony to the Senate Committee on Veterans, Emergency Management, Federal and World Affairs today, in support of HB 2146 A designating US Highway 30 across Oregon as “Oregon Gold Star Families Memorial Highway”.

I am Thomas A Weiss, Oregon State Council, Vietnam Veterans of America delegate. Our organization represents Vietnam veterans in nine Chapters spread across Oregon on both sides of the Cascade Mountains.

I served twelve years in the US Army with seven years in the Pacific Theater which included a tour in Vietnam.

Today, nearly 94,000 Vietnam-era veterans live in Oregon and comprise more than a third of Oregon's veteran population.

Almost one half million Oregonians have served in five major wars: 6,022 made the ultimate sacrifice and about 15,000 veterans were wounded for a total of 21,000 war casualties.

The “Oregon Gold Star Families Memorial Highway” would intersect all five war veterans’ highways along Oregon’s border. Those junctures connect Gold Star Families with their loved ones who made the ultimate sacrifice during five major wars beginning with World War I, 106 years ago.

Now that all of Oregon’s wartime veterans have been honored with highway signs, made possible by the Oregon Legislature’s outstanding support, it is time to honor the Gold Star families left behind by honoring them on the 477-mile US Highway 30, the longest highway in Oregon. It is the last border to border highway available to honor them. Oregon has not yet honored the Gold Star Families with a dedicated highway.

Designating the “Oregon Gold Star Families Memorial Highway” would demonstrate Oregon will not forget its Gold Star Families and help provide closure to families and friends.

If the “Oregon Gold Star Families Memorial Highway” is so designated by this Legislature and the Governor, we would be pleased to help fund and dedicate signs installed by ODOT as we did for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Highway on I-84.

I urge the Committee to recommend a **Do Pass** vote as the committee has done for veterans’ highways over the last fourteen years.

Respectfully,

/s/

Thomas A Weiss

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