

Testimony to the Senate Veterans, Emergency Management, Federal and World Affairs Committee

**HB 2147 A Directs governing body of each county to designate person to ensure interment of unclaimed cremated remains of veteran or survivor of veteran.**

Position: **Favorable**

March 20, 2023

Chair Manning, Vice-Chair Thatcher

Senate Veterans, Emergency Management, Federal and World Affairs

CC: Honorable Members of the Veterans, Emergency Management, Federal and World Affairs Committee

My name is John Lee, and I am a military veteran with 20 years of service in the United States Army. I am a resident of Brownsville, Oregon, and submit this testimony as the Legislative Committee Chair representing the United Veterans' Groups of Oregon (UVGO). The UVGO represents the unanimous position of 14 nationally recognized Veterans organizations in Oregon. UVGO membership is listed at the end of this testimony.

**The United Veterans' Groups of Oregon and Oregon's Veterans strongly supports HB 2147 A.**

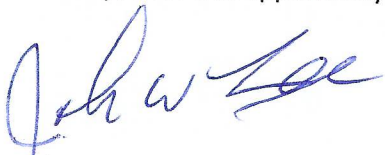
When a veteran's cremated remains go unclaimed internment can become difficult. Any member of the U.S. Armed Forces who dies while on active duty, or veterans who are discharged under conditions other than dishonorable, may be eligible for burial in a national cemetery. This benefit also applies to spouses and dependents of veterans. Many times, our funeral establishments are unable to find the veteran's eligibility for internment as well as the notification living relatives.

Because of privacy laws the funeral establishments may not be authorized to receive the proper eligibility documents. These remains are then stored until such time that the correct information and next of kin are located. Unfortunately, these remains may be forgotten.

Currently there is little oversight to ensure that these remains get interned with the respect that our veterans deserve. HB 2147 A will give the counties oversight to prevent the remains from being stored for long periods of time. It allows for the use of volunteer veterans' remains coordinators as well as removing many of the roadblocks by giving proper authorization to the Veteran's Remains Coordinators. In addition, ODVA has agreed to do the training program on how to process unclaimed remains. This training would be available to all VSOs virtually to ensure it is training at no cost to county offices.

**On behalf of the United Veterans' Groups of Oregon and Oregon's Veterans, we urge the committee to support HP 2147 A.**

Thank you for this opportunity to provide the UVGO position on this important legislative issue.



John Lee  
United Veterans' Groups of Oregon  
Legislative Committee Chairman

**Members of the United Veterans' Groups of Oregon:** Air Force Association; American Legion; Association of the United States Army; Disabled American Veterans; Korean War Veterans' Association; Military Officers Association of America; Military Order of the Purple Heart; National Association of Atomic and Nuclear Veterans, Inc.; Non-Commissioned Officers Association; Paralyzed Veterans of America; Veterans of Foreign Wars; Vietnam Veterans of America; 40+8; Marine Corps League.