

Paul L Evans
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
DISTRICT 20



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

January 26, 2021

Committee on Veterans and Emergency Management
Oregon House of Representatives

Dear Colleagues:

Welcome to the Oregon House of Representatives Committee on Veterans and Emergency Management. The 2021 Legislative Assembly promises to be extraordinary. We have the watch: it is our duty to find rational, reasonable, and responsible solutions to some of the most complex challenges in the history of our nation. We continue to struggle to navigate the realities of a global contagion now into a second year. We continue to weather an economic maelstrom that manifests the darker side of an interdependent global marketplace, and we continue to figure out the best path forward in the shadow of a catastrophic wildfire season that impacted so many of our family, friends, and neighbors.

I believe that there has never been a more important time for good policy: we need effective structures and systems of disaster preparedness, prevention, mitigation, response, and recovery. We must improve our ability to protect our people and place; we must reform legacy thinking and upgrade our statewide resilience capacities. For the past three sessions, our committee has been working hard to raise awareness about the urgent need to reform our statewide emergency management complex. We have developed solid proposals, and we have passed meaningful legislation out of our committee. A few of our bills have become law, but this is the year for making real change – it is the year we must work in a common cause – to transform the status quo – to demand a 21st Century model of delivery.

For the most part, our committee will be emphasizing emergency management reforms. We have a history of making progress through bipartisan teamwork: it is my desire to continue this approach moving forward. Accordingly, I have organized our committee into three workgroups: Vice-Chairs Lewis and Meek will co-chair the EM Reforms workgroup; Representatives Grayber, Wallan, and Wright will focus on veterans legislation – with Representative Wallan chairing the workgroup; and the third workgroup will consist of myself and Representative Wallan with a focus upon the few issues that are not an easy “fit” into the other two workgroups. The goal is to provide a public hearing for as many of the bills as we can given the time constraints. It is my hope that each bill will receive a thoughtful, thorough evaluation by the committee. To ensure that, the workgroup chairs have the discretion to have as many (or as few) conversations about the bills assigned – as they determine necessary. Note: as a designated workgroup, chairs are encouraged to coordinate with committee staff for necessary staff support.

We will manage the work of our committee similarly to other policy committees. The Vice-Chairs, our Committee Administrator Cassie Passon, and I will meet weekly to discuss issues, schedule bills, and share information relevant to the committee. Most of the time, Tuesdays will be reserved for measures related to veterans, and Thursdays for those related to emergency management/military. If something prevents your participation, please notify your respective Vice-Chair, but if that is not possible, you can always contact me or our committee administrator. Throughout the session, I hope to meet each of you at least twice individually to assess your perspectives of the committee, process, and proposals. We have the distinction of serving on a committee most people do not think about until events compel them to reflect upon the relative frailty of the human condition in a dangerous world.

Office: 900 Court St NE, Salem, OR 97301 - Phone: 503-986-1420
District phone: 971-273-0014 – Email: rep.paulevans@oregonlegislature.gov

In closing, I want to emphasize my approach to leading committees. Consensus should be our goal. There are no measures before our committee (or likely to be placed before our committee) that warrant an ideological or partisan battle. Through earnest, open, and transparent negotiation, we have always been able to find a resolution; I will not rush a bill before it is ready – your voice is appreciated – your investment in our work is mission essential. Although we live in heavily partisan times, I work hard to make our committee a haven for common sense. Over the past four sessions as chair (two long, two short), I cannot recall a time we moved a bill forward absent the support of both Vice-Chairs. This is not a promise, but it is a preview. Together we can accomplish so much more when we work in common cause for the people we serve. Let us approach our work with a servant heart and a courageous spirit – Oregonians deserve our maximum effort.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "P. H. C.", written on a light blue background.