

HB 2859 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Veterans and Emergency Management

Action Date: 04/08/21

Action: Do pass with amendments and be referred to Ways and Means. (Printed A-Eng.)

Vote: 6-0-0-0

Yeas: 6 - Evans, Grayber, Lewis, Meek, Wallan, Wright

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: No revenue impact

Prepared By: Cassie Passon, Counsel

Meeting Dates: 4/8

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Directs Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs (ODVA) to create and fill three full-time positions to support administration of veterans' education and training programs, one full-time position for campus veteran programming, and one full-time position to support the Veteran Educational Bridge Grant Program. Appropriates funds from Veterans' Affairs Dedicated Lottery Fund to Veteran Educational Bridge Grant Program, Campus Veteran Resource Center Grant Program, Department of Veterans' Affairs Veteran Services Grant Fund, and grants to counties for veterans' courts. Declares emergency, effective July 1, 2021.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Additional fund for grants
- Directing ODVA to fill all five positions

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

Replaces the measure.

BACKGROUND:

The Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs (ODVA) offers a wide variety of services to Oregon's veterans. The Veteran Educational Bridge Grant Program was created during the 2019 legislative session with the passage of House Bill 2201 to support student veterans with grants up to \$5,000 who are unable to complete an academic program on time because a required course is not available. The Campus Veteran Resource Center Grant Program, created in Senate Bill 143 (2017), aims to strengthen existing campus programs that support veterans in their educational efforts who are transitioning from military service to college life or are transitioning out of college life and into the workforce. The Veteran Services Grant Fund was established in House Bill 2891 in 2017 and was allocated \$1,070,900 to provide grants to veteran service organizations who supply critical services for veterans within the community. Veteran Courts are specialty courts where veteran-specific resources are centralized to allow courts the discretion to impose treatment and other conditions on veterans who commit nonviolent offenses, rather than punitive measures.

House Bill 2859 A directs ODVA to create and fill five full-time positions and appropriates funds from the Veterans' Affairs Dedicated Lottery Fund for the Veteran Educational Bridge Grant Program, Campus Veteran Resource Center Grant Program, Veteran Services Grant Fund, and grants to counties for veterans' courts.