



Oregon

COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION

April 28, 2023

Co-Chairs Meek and Nathanson, Vice Chairs Boquist, Reschke, Walters, and Committee Members:

For the record, we represent Oregon's Tribal and County Veteran Service Officers. On behalf of our membership, we, as the Association Leadership, want to offer some feedback on SB 884A.

First, we want to clarify that association members support the bill's intent to assist and support veterans with disabilities and their surviving spouses. Our feedback is focused on language in the bill that could create challenges for those attempting to access the veteran property tax exemption.

- In two areas of the bill, the following language is used. "More than one service-connected disability, the ratings of which, if added together, would equal 100 percent or more." The veteran community will ask whether this means per the VA's Rating Table ([38 CFR 4.25 Combined Ratings Table](#)) or simple math addition. To eliminate confusion and extra work on the County Assessor's office we suggest updating the language to say; "More than one service-connected disability, the ratings of which, if added together, would equal 100 percent or more based upon the United States Department of Veterans Affairs Combined Ratings Table.
- In the bill, there is language indicating the county can administer a means test for individuals applying for the exemption. This language implies that some individuals who currently receive the exemption or would receive it going forward may not be based upon their income reported to the IRS. Therefore, it has the potential to eliminate a benefit for Veterans and their family members. Thus doing the opposite of the bill's original intent of extending the exemption to more severely (100%) disabled Veterans. As a compromise we suggest adding language that indicates those who currently qualify or once qualified going forward are permanently qualified.
- Lastly, the bill has language indicating that the Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs will pay the county treasurer funds lost due to awarding the exemption. This language leaves association members wondering where the funds are coming from to pay these counties. We are hopeful it is not the County VSO funds which is authorized by the Oregon State Legislation to be distributed by the Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs to counties for the purpose of serving the veteran community in our counties through our offices. To use this funding to backfill this lost tax revenue could adversely affect Tribal and County VSOs and the services we provide.

In closing, we appreciate you allowing us this time to present our feedback on SB 884a. We look forward to hearing any response to our feedback.

Gus L. Bedwell (*President*), Vicki Horn (*Vice President*), Deanna Levinson (*Secretary*), Lisa Pickart (*Treasurer*), Mary Newman (*Member at Large*), Lola Lopez (*Member at Large*), and Ian Briggs (*Member at Large*)

Serving Those Who Served

