

HB 2386 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans

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Meeting Dates: 1/28, 1/30

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure gives authority to the Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs (ODVA) to create rules to carry out the laws on unclaimed remains of veterans and their family members.

Detailed Summary

Authorizes the ODVA to adopt rules to implement laws concerning the unclaimed remains of veterans, veterans' spouses, dependents, and survivors of veterans, and requires veterans' remains coordinators (or county veterans' service officers) carry out their duties in accordance with adopted rules.

REVENUE: No revenue impact

FISCAL: Has minimal fiscal impact

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- The measure is a technical fix of House Bill 2147 (2023)
- The Department of Justice found a technical error regarding ODVA implementing rules in lieu of the Oregon Mortuary and Cemetary Board
- Questions about the current number of unclaimed Veterans remains in Oregon.

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

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. However, burial benefits do not always include covering the cost of the burial. There have been instances, both in Oregon and elsewhere, of the cremated remains of veterans being discovered and unclaimed, and thus uninterred.

House Bill 2147 (2023) directed counties to designate one more "veterans' remains coordinators" to work in a volunteer capacity to identify unclaimed cremated or reduced remains located within the county, establish the eligibility of the individual for interment in a national cemetery, and arrange for the interment of the remains.