

HB 2559 -1 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans

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Meeting Dates: 2/25, 4/3

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure defines "honorable conditions" as a condition of discharge or release that is other than dishonorable.

Detailed Summary

- Changes definition of "honorable conditions" in the statutory definition of a veteran in Oregon, and in statutes related to veteran public employment preference, veteran contract preference, and the veteran dental program.
- Allows an applicant's summary of benefits letter from the U.S. Department of Veteran Administration as eligibility documentation for the Oregon Veteran Dental program in Oregon.

Fiscal impact: TBD

Revenue impact: No revenue impact

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Questions about how many veterans in Oregon would qualify for additional services
- Questions about criminal convictions and discharges under less than honorable conditions
- Discussion about character determinations by the U.S. Veterans Administration in relation to services received

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

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- Removes the proposed definition of 'honorable conditions'.
- Allows an applicant's summary of benefits letter from the U.S. Department of Veteran Administration as eligibility documentation for services and benefits through the Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs.

BACKGROUND:

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) defines a veteran as "a person who served in the active military, naval, air, or space service, and who was discharged or released there from under conditions other than dishonorable." (38 U.S.C. § 101(2)) .

Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS) 408.225 states that: a "Veteran" means a person who:

- Served on active duty with the Armed Forces of the United States:
- For a period of more than 90 consecutive days beginning on or before January 31, 1955, and was discharged or released under honorable conditions;
- For a period of more than 178 consecutive days beginning after January 31, 1955, and was discharged or released from active duty under honorable conditions;
- For 178 days or less and was discharged or released from active duty under honorable conditions because of a service-connected disability;
- For 178 days or less and was discharged or released from active duty under honorable conditions and has a disability rating from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs; or
- For at least one day in a combat zone and was discharged or released from active duty under honorable conditions;

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- Received a combat or campaign ribbon or an expeditionary medal for service in the Armed Forces of the United States and was discharged or released from active duty under honorable conditions; or
- Is receiving a nonservice-connected pension from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs.

ORS 408.225 also states “honorable conditions” has the meaning given that term in rules adopted by the Oregon Department of Veterans’ Affairs (ODVA). According to the Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs, they encounter veterans that do not meet Oregon’s definition of a veteran but do qualify as a veteran and receive services at the VA.

PRELIMINARY