

Support SB466. Support Oregon's military families.

Thad T. Conwell
4363 Hearth Street NE
Salem, OR 97305
theconwells@comcast.net
503-930-1072
29 January 2025

Senate Committee on Veterans, Emergency Management, Federal and World Affairs
Oregon State Senate
900 Court Street
Salem, OR 97301

Subject: Written Testimony in Support of SB466 – Support for Military Children

Dear Senator Manning and esteemed committee members,

For the record, my name is Thad Conwell. I am a Salem, Oregon resident, member of the United States Army Reserve, and most proudly, father of three wonderful children.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my testimony.

I am writing to express my strong support for SB466, a critical piece of legislation aimed at addressing the unique challenges faced by military children. As an Oregon citizen, member of the United States Army Reserve, and most proudly, father to three school-aged children, I have witnessed firsthand the difficulties that military-connected children experience due to frequent relocations, school transitions, and parental deployments. Military families and children face unique challenges not adequately addressed in schools or communities. These challenges are exacerbated by isolation, particularly in areas without a strong military community or hubs. Military youth are disproportionately impacted and suffer from higher rates of anxiety and depression compared to their peers.

SB466 is a necessary step toward ensuring our military-connected children and families receive the support, stability, and educational continuity they deserve. One vital program that addresses these challenges is Oregon Summer Star, which supports the mental health of military children, provides them a place to connect, and helps them become more resilient individuals and leaders.

SB466 would provide essential funding to cover camp expenses each year, allowing military-connected families the opportunity to attend the Oregon Summer Star Camp for free. Additionally, this funding would enable the Oregon Summer Star Camp personnel to work toward creating year-round opportunities for military families to connect and receive ongoing

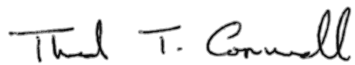
support. By facilitating these initiatives, SB466 ensures that military children receive the mental health and community support they need to thrive.

Supporting SB466 is not just a matter of policy—it is a matter of duty. Military families make tremendous sacrifices for our country, and it is our responsibility to ensure our children do not bear an undue burden in their educational and personal journeys. By passing this bill, we are upholding our commitment to those who serve and ensuring our children have every opportunity to succeed.

I respectfully urge this committee to support SB466 and advance it toward enactment in order to support Oregon's military and veteran families.

Senator Channing and committee members, thank you again for your time and consideration and the opportunity to testify before this committee.

Very respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thad T. Conwell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "T" and "C".

Thad T. Conwell
LTC, CA, USAR
4363 Hearth Street NE
Salem, OR 97305
theconwells@comcast.net
503-930-1072