



Service Employees
International Union
Local 503

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Date: February 27, 2025

To: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On
Transportation and Economic Development

From: James Connolly, Vice President, SEIU 503 Sublocal 274

RE: Support for HB 5038

Dear Co-Chair Woods, Co-Chair Gomberg, Members of the Committee:

My name is James Connolly. I've worked for ODVA for 8 years and provide direct services to all Oregon veterans and their families. I'm writing on behalf of SEIU 503 Sublocal 274 (ODVA) in support of the Governor's Recommended Budget (GRB) for the Oregon Department of Veteran Affairs (ODVA) as described in HB 5038.

SEIU 503 represents over 72,000 dedicated workers in almost every state agency and across the state. At ODVA, SEIU 503 Sublocal 274 represents around 70 percent of the professionals who work tirelessly to ensure that veterans receive the services when they need them. Our members help veterans find suitable housing, gain employment, navigate our complex healthcare system, access loans during homebuying, and so much more.

ODVA staff provide services available to the estimated 260,000 veterans in Oregon having served in 5 major war eras. A large majority of veterans served during wartime and are over the age of 65.

The \$612.4 million investment outlined in the GRB supports the agency's operations, Home Loan Program, Appeals and Special Advocacy, Strategic Partnerships, Oregon Veterans' Homes, and aging veteran services.

The Governor's budget continues to support educational and workforce programs for Oregon's veterans, including the Campus Veteran Resource grant program and the Veterans' Educational Bridge grant program. The budget also enhances emergency financial assistance available to veterans, including enhanced funding for veterans facing homelessness or housing issues. The budget also provides investments to tribal partners to ensure dedicated resources for Veteran Service Officers in tribal communities. Furthermore, the budget provides additional resources to assist veterans transition from an incarceration setting back into their community and increases revenue bond proceeds for the Veterans Home Loan Program. I urge your support for this budget.

Thank you for your time and consideration.