

Chair Tran, Vice Chair Grayber and Lewis. My name is James Riddle. I served in the Navy and Army and retired from the Army in 2014. After I retired I started working helping homeless veterans. After doing that for a couple of years I stood up the Veteran Service Office in Marion County in 2018. Since then I have been able to learn about all of the programs and assistance that help qualified veterans. The VA has programs and grants that are set up to help the veterans that are truly in the worse of ways. The VA does have the Specially Adapted Housing (SAH) and Special Home Adaptation (SHA) Grants, but they only serve a very specific qualifying service-connected disabilities.

- The loss or loss of use of more than one limb.
- The loss or loss of use of a lower leg along with the residuals (lasting effects) of an organic (natural) disease or injury
- Blindness in both eyes (with 20/200 visual acuity or less)
- Certain severe burns
- The loss, or loss of use, of one lower extremity (foot or leg) after September 11, 2001, which makes it so you can't balance or walk without the help of braces, crutches, canes, or a wheelchair
- The loss or loss of use of both hands
- Certain respiratory or breathing injuries

Most veterans even those that are at 100% service-connected will never be eligible for those grants. VA medical also helps veterans get ramps and walk-in showers but again this is only for those specific veterans that qualify for that benefit. HB 3627 will help those veterans that are not able to tap into those programs because they are not rated high enough with their service-connected disability to get help from VA medical, or do not have the qualifying service-connected disabilities to use on of the offered VA grants. HB 3627 will help veterans that do not meet the sever need of those that the VA is already helping but are still in need. Veterans that after service went to work, paid taxes, and lead productive lives, not the combat veterans but the support and supply fields or the peace time veterans that are now in need of assistance. An example of this is;

My office received a call on February 27, 2025 from Female veteran, who was seeking assistance with moving some furniture. Veteran stated that due to a heart condition, she was unable to lift anything over 10lbs. Veteran stated that she contacted a few Veteran organization who stated they could not help here. It was clear she was frustrated and we asked her how we could help. Veteran stated that she needed help moving her couch, a recliner, and her bed set to her new apartment. We asked what day she was looking to have this done, at which time she said by March 8, 2025. Eddie Grainger told her that he and his son would be there to assist. Eddie and his son Lane, met Veteran at her residence in Silverton, OR this past Friday. They first loaded up her couch and recliner and drove to her new residence. Residence was an older home with steps leading up to the front door as well as to the back door. Eddie noticed that there were no hand rails on each of the steps. The front door steps had a lip at the bottom of the step, which will be a tripping hazard. While unloading the couch, both he and his son noticed how slick the steps and the landing were to the front door. We suggested that she get an area rug for grip and asphalt strips for the steps. While we were unloading the rest of the truck, they heard a loud thud. The Veteran had slipped, fell to the bottom of the steps. By the time they got to her, she was rolling onto her back, and saying that she rolled her ankle. Eddie asked if she had hit her head, at which time she said no. He asked her if she wanted him to call an ambulance and she said no. We helped up and into the house. Her ankle was swelling up pretty good. When they finished, they made sure she was okay and she refused further assistance. It's not a matter if, but when the Veteran falls again. Her steps are a serious fall hazard that will cause serious injury to the Veteran. She is a great candidate for a ramp and hand rails.

VA medical nor the grants they have are set up to cover a small number of veterans that do not qualify for their programs. These veterans need the assistance. HB 3627 will help these veterans.

Thank you.