

Submitter: Laremy Criswell

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2050

As a currently serving Active Guard and Reserve Soldier of the Oregon Army National Guard with 27 years of service, I am writing to wholeheartedly support the implementation of Oregon House Bill 2050. This bill aims to exempt from state income tax all retirement pay or pension received by veterans for their service in the Armed Forces of the United States, starting from tax year 2026.

As a veteran myself, I understand the sacrifices that come with serving our country. After dedicating decades of our lives to protecting our nation, we deserve to be recognized and supported in our retirement. Unfortunately, many of my fellow veterans have been forced to consider leaving Oregon due to the financial burden of state income tax on their retirement pay. I've seen it happen to several of my friends and even family members, including my in-laws, who have chosen to relocate to more veteran-friendly states in recent years.

My in-laws, who are also veterans, made the difficult decision to leave Oregon after realizing that they could no longer afford to live here on their fixed retirement income. They, like many other veterans, were attracted to states that offer more favorable tax treatment for military retirees. It's heartbreaking to see our state lose the experience, wisdom, and contributions of these dedicated individuals simply because we don't offer a competitive tax environment.

By passing HB 2050, Oregon can take a significant step towards becoming a more attractive and supportive state for veterans. This bill would not only benefit veterans like myself but also our families and communities. It would allow us to retain our experienced and skilled veterans, who can continue to contribute to our state's economy, volunteer, and participate in civic activities.

The exemption from state income tax on retirement pay would make a significant difference in the lives of Oregon's veterans. It would enable us to stretch our retirement dollars further, allowing us to afford the basics, such as housing, healthcare, and food, without having to worry about the added burden of state taxes. This, in turn, would improve our overall quality of life, reduce stress, and enable us to enjoy the fruits of our labor after decades of service.

I urge our lawmakers to support HB 2050 and demonstrate their commitment to Oregon's veterans. By doing so, we can show our appreciation for their service, attract and retain top talent, and make our state a more desirable place for veterans

to live, work, and thrive.

As someone who has dedicated their life to serving our state and nation, I believe that it's essential for Oregon to take care of its veterans. I'm not asking for special treatment, but rather a fair and competitive tax environment that recognizes the value and sacrifices of our military service. I hope that our lawmakers will join me in supporting HB 2050 and making Oregon a more veteran-friendly state. Thank you for considering my testimony.