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House Approves Boost to Education and Employment Opportunities for Oregon's Veterans

Bills create educational bridge program, apprenticeship outreach

SALEM – The Oregon House of Representatives voted unanimously today to support two bills that would expand educational opportunity and connect veterans with apprenticeship opportunities.

“To the individuals who serve our country, we owe it to them open up opportunity,” said Rep. Paul Evans (D-Salem) who carried the bills on the House floor. “Whether it is helping people continue their education or connecting individuals with apprenticeship programs, the state has an important role to play in supporting veterans.”

[House Bill 2201](#) establishes the Veteran Educational Bridge Grant Program within the Department of Veterans' Affairs to provide grants to veterans who are enrolled in an approved course of study that qualifies for U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs benefits but are unable to complete a degree program due to one or more required courses not being offered until a later date. The veteran would have to be eligible for federal financial assistance.

“This is a simple bill, but for the veterans who are put in this situation, it will have a big impact,” said Rep. Mark Meek (D-Oregon City). “This will ensure, regardless of the circumstances, that veterans who just need a little extra time to complete their education can do that.”

[House Bill 2202](#) directs Bureau of Labor and Industries to develop and administer an outreach program to former members of Oregon National Guard and Reserve to inform them of careers in the trades and to connect them to apprenticeship opportunities.

“The unemployment rate for veterans is slightly higher than that of the general population,” said Rep. Courtney Neron (D-Wilsonville). “Programs like this will help tackle that problem and connect our veterans with the good jobs that help keep our state moving.”

Both bills now go to the Oregon Senate for consideration.

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