



NEWS

Oregon Legislature - House Democratic Caucus

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House Passes Two Veterans Bills in Two Days

HB 2241 and HB 2403 would remove barriers to service and improve reintegration

SALEM – Representative Greg Matthews (D-Gresham) this week championed two veterans' bills on the House Floor, House Bill 2241 and House Bill 2403. Both Bills passed unanimously.

HB 2241, which Rep. Matthews carried, would remove barriers to service by broadening the definition of "uniformed service" for employment protection to allow state employees two weeks paid leave for initial active duty training.

"In 2009 we passed law prohibiting employment discrimination against a service member for fulfilling their service obligation," said Rep. Matthews. "HB2241 picks up where we left off, and expands this right to those training for initial active duty."

HB 2403, which Rep. Matthews spoke in favor of, would require state agencies to partner with the Oregon Military Department to provide reintegration services to veterans. The bill would create a "no wrong door" mentality in Oregon's approach to reintegration issues. The Task Force on Veterans' Reintegration, on which Rep. Matthews served, found a lack of coordination among agencies that intersect with veterans and recommended the provisions of HB 2403. HB 2403 is one of 17 bills containing Task Force recommendations.

"Oregon is a model for veterans' integrations issues around the country, despite the fact that we do not have an active duty military base," said Rep. Matthews. "HB 2403 is another example of our dedication to getting veteran's issues right."

Rep. Matthews, a former US Army Paratrooper and twenty-four year veteran of public safety, spent eleven years as an officer for the Gresham Police Department before joining Gresham Fire and Emergency Services where he has served the last thirteen years. Rep. Matthews is the Co-Vice Chair of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, which is co-chaired by Representative Brad Witt (D-Clatskanie).

“As Co-Chair of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, it is my goal to honor the service of our men and women in uniform by ensuring they have the tools they need to serve effectively and the resources they need to reintegrate once they return home,” said Rep. Witt.

HB 2241 and HB 2403 now move to the Senate for consideration.

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