



# NEWS

Oregon Legislature - House Democratic Caucus

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
June 25, 2013

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## House votes to strengthen support for homeless veterans

SALEM – Today the Oregon House of Representatives voted to provide stronger housing support for veterans in Oregon.

Homelessness among veterans is a growing problem throughout the country. Young veterans between the ages of 18 and 30 are more than twice as likely to be homeless compared with their peers who have not served in the armed services.

House Bill 2417A would provide approximately \$5.83 million in housing assistance for returning veterans in the upcoming budget cycle by increasing the fee from \$15 to \$20 for recording certain real property documents.

“We need to do everything we can to support our combat veterans as they return home,” said Rep. Greg Matthews (D – Gresham), Chair of the Veterans’ Services Committee and a U.S. Army veteran. “Every Oregonian should find the high rate of homelessness among our veterans completely unacceptable. Today we took a small step to help those who sacrificed for our country.”

Female veterans are at even greater risk of homelessness than male veterans, and the numbers of both are rising at staggering rates. The number of homeless women veterans in America, for instance, increased by 141% between 2006 and 2010.

“Oregon’s veterans deserve our respect and support, yet veterans who served nobly in Iraq and Afghanistan are struggling with higher rates of homelessness and housing instability than the general public and even higher rates for women veterans,” said Rep. Shemia Fagan (D – Clackamas/East Multnomah County), Vice Chair of the Veterans’ Services Committee. “We can do better, and this bill is a big step forward.”

Funds raised through HB 2417A will support a range of housing needs for veterans. The existing revenue from document recording fees has had a critical impact on the housing delivery system in Oregon, but these resources have not been meeting the needs for affordable housing around the state.

“I’m proud of the strong, bipartisan support the legislature showed our brave men and women veterans by supporting this bill today,” said Rep. Caddy McKeown (D – Coos Bay). McKeown carried the bill on the House floor as her father, a U.S. Army veteran who served in World War II, sat beside her.

HB 2417A passed the House 55-4 and now heads to the Senate.

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