



SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

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Senate votes to help rural veterans connect with services

SB 832 is part of a series of bills related to Ballot Measure 96

SALEM – The Oregon Senate passed legislation today to help connect veterans in rural Oregon access services many of them depend on.

Senate Bill 832 – which passed the Senate on a 29-0 vote – directs the Oregon Department of Veterans’ Affairs Advisory Committee to advise on the merits of establishing a grant program to fund assistance for rural veterans in accessing health care, veterans’ benefits, housing, transportation and court processes.

“Veterans sacrifice so much for our country, and they deserve to be taken care of and provided with the services that we promise to provide them when they come home,” said Sen. Laurie Monnes Anderson (D-Gresham), who carried the bill and is herself a military veteran. “This is an opportunity to explore an option to make sure we have services that can help our veterans in rural Oregon – who are isolated from urban hubs – an easier way to get the help they need.”

The grant program would be established in cooperation with the Veterans Health Administration Office of Rural Health, and would be used to solicit qualified nonprofit providers to offer these services.

Veterans receive health care benefits through the federal Veterans Administration. Those hospitals usually are located at populated areas, which makes it harder for rural veterans who rely on the VA for health care. Overall, rural veterans have difficulty accessing all types of assistance – not just health care – especially as they age. This bill starts the process of creating a way to fund assistance to rural veterans so they can access the services they need.

Senate Bill 832 now goes to the House of Representatives for consideration.

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