

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON**  
**VETERANS' AFFAIRS**

**April 26, 2005 Hearing Room C**

**8:30 A.M. Tapes 80 - 82**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:           Rep. Donna Nelson, Chair**

**Rep. Phil Barnhart, Vice-Chair**

**Rep. Debi Farr, Vice-Chair**

**Rep. Brian Boquist**

**Rep. Scott Bruun**

**Rep. Dave Hunt**

**Rep. Betty Komp**

**STAFF PRESENT:           Jim Stembridge, Committee Administrator**

**Erin Seiler, Committee Assistant**

**MEASURES/ISSUES HEARD:**

**HJM 32 – Public Hearing**

**HJM 33 - Public Hearing**

**HJM 9 – Public Hearing**

**HJM 14 – Public Hearing**

**HJM 34 – Public Hearing**

**HB 2932 – Public Hearing and Work Session**

**HB 3053 – Work Session**

**HB 2677 – Work Session**

**HB 3331 – Public Hearing**

**HB 3333 – Public Hearing**

**These minutes are in compliance with Senate and House Rules. Only text enclosed in quotation marks reports a speaker's exact words. For complete contents, please refer to the tapes.**

<b>TAPE/#</b>	<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>TAPE 80, A</b>		
002	Chair Nelson	Opens the meeting at 8:43 a.m.
015	Chair Nelson	Submits and summarizes written testimony on behalf Wes Carter on Veterans' Issues ( <b>EXHIBIT A</b> ).
134	Chair Nelson	Opens a public hearing on HJM 32 and HJM 33.

**HJM 32/HJM 33 – PUBLIC HEARING**

136	Rep. Jeff Kropf	House District 17. Submits and summarizes written testimony in support of HJM 32 ( <b>EXHIBIT B</b> ).
180	Rep. Kropf	Submits and summarizes written testimony in support of HJM 33 ( <b>EXHIBIT C</b> ).
242	Chair Nelson	Closes the public hearing on HJM 32 and HJM 33. Opens a public hearing on HJM 9, HJM 14, and HJM 34.

**HJM 9/HJM 14/HJM 34 – PUBLIC HEARING**

250	Jim Stembridge	Committee Administrator. Explains HJM 9, which urges Congress to pass legislation giving families of reservists' health insurance coverage when reservist is called or ordered into active duty. Explains HJM 14, which urges Congress to fund health care for veterans
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without increase co-payments and user fees. Explains HJM 34, which urges Congress to pass National Guard and Reserve Bill of Rights Act of 2005 giving reservists right to quality, affordable health care.

- 273 Rep. Boquist Verifies that the Department of Defense is in the process of implementing a health insurance program for families of deployed Reservists.
- 278 Chair Nelson Closes the public hearing on HJM 9.
- 280 Chair Nelson Expresses concern that mental, dental, and visual insurance coverage are not included in the language of HJM 14.
- 315 Rep. Barnhart Notes the significant amount of testimony heard on the need for adequate funding for health, dental, and mental care for veterans.
- 322 Kevin O'Reilly Government Relations/Advocacy Director, Oregon Paralyzed Veterans of America. Testifies in support of HJM 14.
- 363 Chair Nelson Closes the public hearing on HJM 14.
- 370 Stembridge Explains that there is federal legislation pending to establish a National Guard and Reserve Bill of Rights.
- 390 O'Reilly Testifies in support of HJM 34.

#### **TAPE 81, A**

- 002 Rep. Hunt Verifies that the National Guard and Reserves Bill of Rights does include issues beyond healthcare.
- 006 Rep. Hunt Suggests a possible amendment to HJM 34.
- 011 Chair Nelson Closes the public hearing on HJM 34. Opens the public hearing and work session on HB 2932.

#### **HB 2932 – PUBLIC HEARING AND WORK SESSION**

- 013 Jim Stembridge Committee Administrator. Explains HB 2932, which is relating to veterans. Submits and summaries -1 amendments (**EXHIBIT D**).

033	Mac MacDonald	Representative, Veterans' Organizations. Testifies in support of HB 2932.
041	Paula Brown	Deputy Director, Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs (ODVA). Testifies in support of HB 2932.
068	Rep. Bruun	Asks if HB 2932 would change, in any way, the current operations and administrative procedures of ODVA.
070	Brown	Replies that HB 2932 would not change current administrative practices at ODVA.
073	Rep. Hunt	Asks if language in -1 amendments is parallel to the language that is used to establish other departments.
078	Brown	Expresses uncertainty about whether the language parallels that of other department.
079	Rep. Hunt	Asks if the language relating to the director's authority is the same language used to establish the oversight authority of other departments.
083	Brown	Confirms that that is the assumption.
085	Rep. Farr	Asks if there is a fiscal attached to HB 2932.
089	Brown	States that the any fiscal impact is related to minor administrative costs that will not have "a huge impact."
103	Rep. Barnhart	Comments on how, by statute, the ODVA will not exist until HB 2932 are signed by the Governor.
127	<b>Rep. Barnhart</b>	<b>MOTION: Moves to ADOPT HB 2932-1 amendments dated 04/20/05.</b>
		<b>VOTE: 7-0-0</b>
	<b>Chair Nelson</b>	<b>Hearing no objection, declares the motion CARRIED.</b>

130 Rep. Barnhart **MOTION: Moves HB 2932 to the floor with a DO PASS AS AMENDED recommendation.**

**VOTE: 7-0-0**

**AYE: In a roll call vote, all members present vote Aye.**

**Chair Nelson The motion CARRIES.**

**REP. NELSON will lead discussion on the floor.**

149 Chair Nelson Closes the public hearing and work session on HB 2932. Opens the work session on HB 3053.

**HB 3053 – WORK SESSION**

154 Jim Stembridge Explains HB 3053, which establishes Oregon Troops to Teachers program within Oregon Student Assistance Program. Submits and summarizes -1 amendments (**EXHIBIT E**).

168 Rep. Komp Explains why the amendments are necessary for HB 3053.

202 Rep. Bruun Speaks to why Merchant Marines should be included as eligible participants in Troops to Teachers program.

213 Stembridge Notes that HB 3053 has a subsequent referral to House Education, who could amend the bill to include Merchant Marines.

223 Rep. Barnhart Questions whether Merchant Marines involved in transportation support for military combat operations are eligible to participate in Troops to Teachers program.

236 Jack LaBox Representative, American Legion. Explains that Merchant Marines are not members of the military and do not have any military status.

253 Rep. Farr States concern regarding the omission of Merchant Marines will be addressed by the House Education Committee.

259 Rep. Barnhart **MOTION: Moves to ADOPT HB 3053-1 amendments dated 04/12/05.**

**VOTE: 7-0-0**

**Chair Nelson**                    **Hearing no objection, declares the motion CARRIED.**

**269**            **Rep. Barnhart**                    **MOTION: Moves HB 3053 to the floor with a DO PASS AS AMENDED recommendation and BE REFERRED to the committee on Education by prior reference.**

278            Rep. Komp                    Points out that all members of the committee will be added as sponsors of HB 3053.

**290**                                    **VOTE: 7-0-0**

**AYE:            In a roll call vote, all members present vote Aye.**

**Chair Nelson**                    **The motion CARRIES.**

291            Chair Nelson                    Speaks to the success of the Oregon Military Departments Youth Challenge Program in Bend, Oregon.

365            Rep. Hunt                    Affirms the significance of the Youth Challenge Program.

**TAPE 80, B**

020            Chair Nelson                    Closes the work session on HB 3053. Opens the work session on HB 2677.

**HB 2677 – WORK SESSION**

026            Jim Stembridge                    Committee Administrator. Explains HB 2677, which creates Oregon National Guard Life Insurance Reimbursement Program and Oregon National Guard Life Insurance Reimbursement Program Fund.

052            Colonel Mike Caldwell                    Deputy Director, Oregon Military Department (OMD). Explains that OMD estimates the cost of life insurance will be \$16.25 dollars per month at an average deployment of 18 months per soldiers.

059            Chair Nelson                    Asks how many Oregon National Guard members are currently deployed.

060	Caldwell	Identifies how many Oregon National Guard are currently deployed on 18 month tours.
074	Chair Nelson	Comments that fiscal impact statement is based on current deployment.
080	Caldwell	Points out that fiscal estimate needs to take into account the 1,000 Oregon National Guard soldiers “in queue” for deployment in 2006.
095	Chair Nelson	Asks whether an individual convicted of a felony can continue to serve in Oregon National Guard.
104	Caldwell	Explains what the repercussions would be for an Oregon National Guard soldier who is convicted of a crime.
118	Chair Nelson	Asks how many Oregon National Guard members have died in Iraq.
120	Caldwell	Confirms that ten soldiers have died in Iraq.
123	Chair Nelson	Asks whether HB 2677 should be made retroactive to include the ten soldiers who have died.
139	Rep. Boquist	Explains that there is a supplemental life insurance package being considered at the federal level and questions whether HB 2677 should go forward only as a “back stop” measure.
170	Caldwell	Notes that all the soldiers who have died have full life insurance and supplemental insurance through OMD.
182	Rep. Hunt	Expresses concern over the potential cost of HB 2677, questioning if, given the limited amount of available funds, this program meets the unmet needs of soldiers and if resources should be directed elsewhere.
198	Caldwell	Comments that life insurance is important, but it is “not going to be in the top three on their wish list.”
222	Chair Nelson	Points out that HB 2677 is part of The Governor’s Military package.
252	Mac MacDonald	

Representative, Veterans' Organization. Testifies that HB 2677 needs to include Reserve soldiers.

- 260 Chair Nelson Asks how many Reserve soldiers have died in Iraq.
- 264 Caldwell Confirms the death of three Reservists in Iraq.
- 275 Chair Nelson Closes the work session on HB 2677. Opens the public hearing on HB 3331.

### **HB 3331 – PUBLIC HEARING**

- 282 Jim Stembridge Committee Administrator. Explains HB 3331, which increases pay and allowances of Adjutant General and Assistant Adjutants General. Submits and summarizes -1 amendments (**EXHIBIT F**).
- 290 Rep. Jeff Kropf House District 17. Submits and summarize written testimony in support of HB 3331 (**EXHIBIT G**). Submits 2005 Military Pay Charts (**EXHIBIT H**).
- 335 Colonel Mike Caldwell Deputy Director, Oregon Military Department (OMD). Explains the military pay system.
- 370 Rep. Kropf Notes that HB 3331 has a subsequent referral to Ways and Means.
- 372 Chair Nelson Asks how the pay rate of OMD compares to neighboring states.
- 375 Caldwell Explains how Oregon pay compares to neighboring states.

### **TAPE 81, B**

- 015 Chair Nelson Verifies that OMD budget did not include 3.5 percent pay rise for staff.
- 018 Caldwell States OMD personnel budget remains frozen.
- 028 Chair Nelson Asks what the pay rate is for Adjutant General in other Western states.



050	Rep. Kropf	Compares the pay schedules of the Adjutant General in Oregon to those in Colorado, Arizona, and, California.
057	Rep. Boquist	Asks what the pay is for Adjutant General, Assistant-Adjutant General, and how many “management days” are available to General Officers.
060	Caldwell	Lists the salaries of the Adjutant General and Assistant-Adjutant General for the OMD and how many “management days” are available to General Officers.
071	Rep. Boquist	Clarifies how many individual drill days available to a soldier.
080	Chair Nelson	Verifies that the Adjutant General and Assistant-Adjutant General are a part of the Public Employee Retirement System (PERS).
094	Caldwell	Explains how the size of the Oregon National Guard compares to Washington and California.
101	Rep. Komp	Asks how many soldiers the Adjutant General supervises.
105	Caldwell	Identifies that the Adjutant General supervises 8,000 total people.
111	Rep. Komp	Comments on the inequity in salary of the Adjutant General compared to a middle school principal.
123	Chair Nelson	Asks if the Assistant-Adjutant General and Deputy Adjutant General is the same person.
125	Caldwell	Clarifies the difference between Deputy to the Adjutant General and Assistant-Adjutant General.
146	Rep. Barnhart	Asks if grade-of-pay for Adjutant General and Assistant-Adjutant Generals limits OMD ability to recruit individuals for these positions.
148	Caldwell	Explains why grade-of-pay does not “generally effect” recruitment.
171	Rep. Barnhart	Confirms that a General Officer would take a pay cut to become Adjutant General.

- 178 Rep. Kropf Explains that the intention of HB 3331 is “really just matter of equity.”
- 196 Chair Nelson Closes the public hearing on HB 3331. Opens the public hearing on HB 3333.

**HB 3333 – PUBLIC HEARING**

- 198 Jim Stembridge Committee Administrator. Explains HB 3333, which creates Wounded Soldier Relief Program in Oregon Military Department.
- 200 Rep. Jeff Kropf House District 17. Submits and summarizes written testimony in support of HB 3333 (**EXHIBIT I**).
- 237 Chair Nelson Asks what type of the injury soldier would incur to access to funds from the Wounded Soldier Relief Program.
- 245 Colonel Mike Caldwell Deputy Director, Oregon Military Department (OMD). Explains how combat wounds are adjudicated by the OMD.
- 272 Rep. Kropf Explains the purpose of HB 3333.
- 290 Chair Nelson Explains why definition of veteran needs to be changed in HB 3333.
- 312 Caldwell Recommends removing language related to definition of veteran.
- 352 Rep. Kropf States willingness to draft amendments to HB 3333.
- 365 Chair Nelson Comments on the need to proceed with caution because of the similarities between HB 3333 and other veteran-related bills.
- 386 Rep. Kropf States that the HB 3333 is for wounded soldiers, not for veterans.

**TAPE 82, A**

- 001 Caldwell Praises the work of Rep. Kropf on behalf of Oregon soldiers.
- 027 Rep. Kropf Addresses effects to raise funds for the Oregon soldiers and the Afghan/Iraqi Freedom Memorial.

063	Lieutenant Peter Wood	Soldier, Oregon National Guard. Speaks to tour of duty in Iraq
085	Chair Nelson	Closes the public hearing on HB 3333. Adjourns the meeting at 10:40 a.m.

### **EXHIBIT SUMMARY**

- A. Veterans' Issues, written testimony of Wes Carter, Donna Nelson, 2 pp**
- B. HJM 32, written testimony, Jeff Kropf, 1 p**
- C. HJM 33, written testimony, Jeff Kropf, 1 p**
- D. HB 2932, -1 amendments, staff, 74 pp**
- E. HB 3053, -1 amendments, staff, 1 p**
- F. HB 3331, -1 amendments, staff, 3 pp**
- G. HB 3331, written testimony, Jeff Kropf, 1 p**
- H. HB 3331, 2005 Military Pay Charts, Jeff Kropf, 5 pp**
- I. HB 3333, written testimony, Jeff Kropf, 1 p**