

# Oregon Veterans' Services Task Force

## Whole Group

Date: Thursday, April 3, 2008

Place: DHS Room 252

Convened: 3:07 p.m.

Members not present (known): Erinn Kelley-Siel, Rep. Jeff Barker, Jim Keller

Chair, Paul Evans (Governor's Veterans' Policy Advisor) introduced himself, states that he hopes to get everyone out the door today by 5:15. Gives the group a summary of target dates, report fiscal pieces to the Governor by August, the overall report by December after having conducted a review and assessment of veteran policy.

There are 27 voting members on the task force. There will likely be nearly 100 individuals involved with the work of the task force before it concludes. There are no secrets and meetings are open to the public.

Round the table introductions (*bolded names are those individuals listed as task force members as of 4/3/08*)– **Michelle Nelson, Dr. Bruce Goldberg, Dan Estes, Brig. Gen. Mike Caldwell, Jim Willis, Jerry Lorang, Jeanne Arana, Krissa Caldwell, Mic Alexander, Tino Ornelas, Debbie Koreski, Jim Tuchschildt, Mike Burton, Victor Merced, Amy Goodall, Scott McCrae,** Jack Hiems, Tom Mann, Robin Steckley, David Randall, Ken Berry, Frank Van Cleave, Jeff Bodenweiser, Mac MacDonald, Richard Lightfoot, Kristin Murphy, Diana Simpson, Paula Brown, Frank Van Meter, Val Conley, Linda McMillan, Linda Christy, Christopher Dauterman, Dan Long, Chuck Broussard, Rick Krieger, **Rep. Peter Courtney,** Sasha Pollack.

Chair Evans continued – member packets that still need notarizing are here and a notary is present to take care of these, will do so at the break. Dismiss yourselves as needed while trying to be polite while doing so.

Refer to the Executive Order – The reason we are doing what we are doing. There are basically two tracks. The first one being the fact that there are some 360,000 veterans in Oregon, plus the number of mobilizations on the Iraq and Afghanistan front, approximately 7,000 individuals from National Guard and some 3,200 in 2008-2009. This does not count reservists.

These service members experience is somewhat unique in that most see combat action, most do at least two tours, and most are heads of families. This brings about unique needs for the service members and their families. This is the moment that we can put together a plan to get out of the 2009-2010 Congress, what we need for Oregon to adequately serve these individuals. That is basically what we are here to do.

In discussing with the Governor, it was decided that what made the most sense is to look at the needs of the veterans and how their needs could be grouped by uniqueness. That is how the three subcommittees were devised. There is a purpose as to how the membership of the subcommittees was selected.

Subcommittee Chart handout was passed out, this is just a main topic list to get you started.

Interesting stats – 23 percent of all homeless individuals are veterans. Current annual costs for war in Iraq and Afghanistan is 12-15 billion dollars.

On the agenda, there are a few questions thrown out there for conversation. These are to help you ensure that you get out of this what you expect as well. Example: What policy area interests you most?

General Discussion of concerns and comments followed. The topics mentioned are –

- All three areas are equally important.
- Comments surrounding what services and programs are available today and what are the real needs?
- What the GI Bill did for WWII veterans versus what it is today?
- Do veterans know of these benefits? Federal issues compared to state issues about benefits.
- Unique times due to the largest age range of veterans WWII to current returning.
- Help for the increase of families that are now affected.
- Medical care for all veterans their dependents.
- There is a wide disbursement of veterans throughout the entire state of Oregon.

Chair continues, the rules are much more lax than what might be thought. If there are individuals and resources that you need to contact you are encouraged to do this. We are on a fairly short timeframe. Today I hope that you are thinking through this process and make a real investment in this project. Think of this process as making a road map for Oregon and for the country in terms of recommendations that you feel comfortable with and proud of based on your experience. Ultimately, 360,000 Oregonians and a generation of returning veterans are counting on it.

We are now going to go ahead and break into the committees after a ten minute break Be aware that there will be issues that overlap that is just fact.

Group dispersed.