



For Immediate Release

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Avakian on Court of Appeals ruling: Veterans deserve fair treatment and opportunity for economic advancement

Ruling affirms BOLI Final Order in veterans' preference case against Multnomah County

PORTLAND, OR—[The Oregon Court of Appeals today upheld](#) a [BOLI civil rights decision](#) that found that the Multnomah County Sheriff's Office failed to properly credit a disabled veteran's military service under the state's veterans' hiring preference law.

Sgt. Rod Edwards filed the civil rights complaint against the Multnomah County Sheriff's Office in 2013 after unsuccessfully applying for a promotion to lieutenant.

Under Oregon's veterans' preference law, public agencies hiring for civil service positions must give special consideration to veterans who meet the minimum qualifications and any special qualifications for a position.

An earlier BOLI investigation determined that the county did not have a method of ranking applicants with numeric scoring, nor did it have a written policy describing how it would apply the legal hiring requirements. BOLI rejected the county's argument that the veterans' preference law applies only during the initial screening, not throughout the hiring process. The agency awarded Edwards \$50,000 in damages.

The Court of Appeals affirmed the BOLI Final Order. In response to the ruling, Commissioner Avakian issued the following statement:

We're committed to ensuring that Oregon veterans have access to economic opportunity and career advancement. Today's ruling helps provide veterans with a level playing field so that they can continue to contribute and serve communities around the state.

BOLI's Civil Rights Division has opened a separate investigation of the Multnomah County Sheriff's Office to determine whether Lt. Brent Richie faced unlawful retaliation for protected whistleblowing activities.

For more information about BOLI's efforts to protect workplaces and the civil rights of all Oregonians, visit <http://www.oregon.gov/BOLI>. Oregon employers, public agencies and local governments can contact the BOLI's [Technical Assistance for Employers Program](#) at (971) 673-0824.

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