



For Immediate Release

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CONTACT: Charlie Burr, (971) 673-0788

Avakian on Supreme Court ruling: Veterans deserve fair treatment and level playing field
Ruling affirms BOLI Final Order in veterans' preference case against Multnomah County

PORTLAND, OR—[The Oregon Supreme Court 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.

Last year, an Oregon Court of Appeals decision affirmed BOLI's Final Order. In response to the Oregon Supreme Court decision today affirming the ruling, Commissioner Avakian issued the following statement:

Today's ruling is a win for veterans and their right to have a level playing field when they return from service and apply for work at home. We're committed to ensuring that Oregon veterans have access to career advancement so that they can continue serving and contributing to communities around the state.

Public agencies seeking help navigating Oregon's civil rights protections and veterans' preference guidance can contact the agency's Technical Assistance for Employers Program at (971) 673-0824. Further guidance on Oregon's veterans' preference law can be found [here](#).

For more information about BOLI's efforts to protect workplaces and the civil rights of all Oregonians, visit <http://www.oregon.gov/BOLI>.

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