

STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF VETERANS SERVICES
TESTIMONY ON S.B. No. 1132, RELATING TO VETERAN SERVICES
COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY AND MILITARY AFFAIRS
FEBRUARY 10, 2009

Good afternoon Chair Will Espero, Vice-Chair Robert Bunda, and members of the Senate Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs.

I am Mark Moses, Director of the Office of Veterans Services (OVS). I appreciate this opportunity to support the intent of SB 1132, which establishes a veterans' services task force to address the many challenges veterans and their families encounter upon return from deployment, as long as its implementation does not impact or replace the priorities set forth in the Executive Biennium Budget for Fiscal Years 2009-2010.

I thank the legislature for expressing its collective concern about the welfare of all returning veterans including National Guard members and Reservist.

The OVS already has an advisory board that includes many of the same entities suggested for the task force. The Advisory Board on Veterans Services can address the many challenges as specified in this measure.

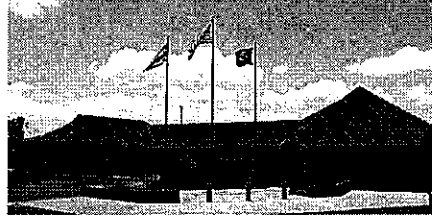
However, given the limited staffing and budget of the OVS we would require one staff position to develop and complete a report of recommendations and to arrange for meetings at which information can be shared between service providers and the advisory board task force members. We also lack the funds to reimburse expenses, including travel, as necessary to perform the task specified in the measure.

We currently work closely with these entities for the benefit of our veterans. We are acutely aware of the situation before us.

Given our current economic circumstances, it may not be practical to implement this measure at this time.

Thank you for allowing me to present the Veterans' perspective on this issue. I will respond to any questions.

OAHU VETERANS COUNCIL



"a gathering place for veterans"
OAHU VETERANS CENTER

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Vietnam Veterans of America
Chapter 858
Disabled American Veterans - Chapt. 3
Fleet Reserve Association Branch
And Unit 46
American Veterans Empowerment &
Support Community Operations
National Assn. for Atomic Veterans
Radiated Veterans

February 7, 2009

TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 1132 RELATING TO ESTABLISHING A VETERANS' SERVICES TASK FORCE

PUBLIC SAFETY AND MILITARY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 10, 2009 1:00 PM, CONFERENCE ROOM 229

BY OAHU VETERANS COUNCIL

Good afternoon Chair and members of the Committee. The Oahu Veterans Council does not support the intent of Senate Bill 1132. The bill seeks to establish yet another committee or task force when there are three in existence that have been involved in many of the issues that this task force seeks to establish. The Oahu Veterans Council consists of representatives from all veteran organizations on Oahu and meets monthly to discuss items of mutual interest with representation from the Department of Veterans Affairs, State Office of Veterans Services and Department of Labor. The State Office of Veterans Services also meets monthly with representation from each of the neighbor islands, the VA, Department of Labor and other state agencies. One organization missing from your list of representatives is the Veterans Affairs, Pacific Island Health Care System. It also has an advisory board made up of representatives from the neighbor islands. All three boards/councils are very involved in assisting our returning military both before and after they are released from active duty. They are particularly sensitive to the needs of our returning guard and reserves.

To establish yet another task force, although wider in scope, in the opinion of the Oahu Veterans Council, is unnecessary and redundant. The Council stands ready to assist in any way it can to help our returning servicemen and women.

Fred Ballard

Fred Ballard

President



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