

MILITARY AND VETERANS LAW SECTION

Executive Committee

April 21, 2015 Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 12:00 noon by the Chair, Tom Flaherty, at the Oregon State Bar Center in Tigard, Oregon. Present were Tom Flaherty (chair), Mary Ellen Farr (secretary), Mark Ronning (past chair), Daniel Zene Crowe, Jack Platten (section member), Jonah J. Hemenway, Chris Griffin (guest), Troy Wood (bar liaison). Present by telephone were Brian Scott Wayson (treasurer), and committee members Dave Kremer, Ariel Dreher, Jim Rice, Spencer Gwartney, Mark Holady, and Robert Schulhof.

Minutes. The minutes of the meeting of March 17, 2015, were approved unanimously.

Committee Reports.

Legal Clinic. Dan Crowe reported on the progress of the Legal Clinic committee. After discussion with bar advisors, Crowe drafted a memorandum to ask the BOG for approval to work toward establishing the Oregon Veterans Legal Clinic at Willamette University. He circulated the memorandum to some members of the executive committee. Crowe also met with faculty at Willamette Law School. The dean indicated he wanted the law school to become a destination law school for returning veterans. Crowe noted that there is a focus nationally for such clinics. Ronning stated that the clinic will both help veterans and train new lawyers to handle veterans' issues. Kremer added that the Oregon Department of Justice supports a consumer protection legal clinic and provides a lawyer to help at the clinic. Wood stated that it will be easier to get BOG approval if whatever funds are raised are directed to a separate account and not to the bar. Crowe is working on various fund raising options, none of which are firmed up at present.

After consideration of the issue and the draft memorandum, a motion was made and approved unanimously to go forward with getting bar approval with the following additions: add something on the importance of such a legal clinic, include a statement that there will be no contractual obligations on the part of the section, and there will be no direct involvement of the bar in funds raised. A second motion was also approved unanimously that Crowe was authorized to present a memorandum to the BOG, petitioning for authorization to move toward establishment of a legal clinic, in substantially the form presented in draft, including the above changes, and whatever other drafting changes Crowe felt necessary, to be submitted by April 22, 2015, to the BOG. Crowe and Flaherty agreed to be available to meet with the BOG at its meeting on Friday, April 24, 2015.

CLE Committee. Holady gave the committee report. Holady met with veterans in Bend to find out if there is support for shorter CLEs at VA facilities around the southern part of the state. He is currently looking for speakers. Committee members commented that there are more than 300,000 veterans living in Oregon. Wood suggested involving local community bar associations as well.

Law School Class. Ronning reported that he and bar member Sean O'Day have volunteered to teach the class, likely with visiting lecturers. He has spoken with Associate Deans Williams and Santos about establishing the class. It would be difficult to get the class offered next semester, but the following semester is a possibility. There will be twelve two-hour classes.

Legislative. Flaherty gave Farr a list of pending legislative bills which may affect the membership, compiled by the bar. Farr and Hemenway will post the potential legislation to the web site so members can keep track of bills which might affect them. Those are: HB 3354 which establishes a task force on innovative housing strategies for veterans; HB 3388 which authorizes reserve officers sponsored by law enforcement to pay for training as police with cash and G.I. Bill education benefits; HB 3479 which creates the position of Oregon Women Veterans Coordinator in the Department of Veterans' Affairs; HB 3532 which establishes a task force to study how to provide benefits for disabled veterans through a preferred worker program and to make recommendations for legislation regarding implementation and potential funding sources for a preferred worker program for disabled veterans; HCR 22 which recognizes and honors Army Specialist Daniel Marks for service; HJM 14 which requests DVA Portland Regions Benefit Office to release data regarding patient-centered care program; HJM 18 which urges Congress to change funding of veterans' health care from discretionary entitlement to permanent and direct entitlement; HJM 20 which urges Congress to fund and maintain USCG air facility at Newport in perpetuity; SB 691 which exempts dishonorable discharges from the armed forces that are based solely on sexual orientation; SB 780 which directs the Department of Corrections to establish a pilot program for mental health treatment for addicted inmates who are service members or who have PTSD; and SB 781 which permits the Director of the Department of Consumer and Business Services to permit exceptions for certain parts of the insurance code.

Ronning also noted there is pending legislation which will change preferences given to veterans in public employment.

Membership. Crowe mentioned that he had had good response from the e-mail he sent to members of the bar who have waivers as serving military and has recruited three new members of the section as a result.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 p.m.