

Veterans and Military Bills of Interest

2015-2016 Legislative Session

(as of October 31, 2015)

Veterans Education Benefits

AB 13 (Chávez)

This bill exempts from the California Community College (CCC) nonresident student fees those veterans living in California and covered under the federal Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 (Choice Act), and authorizes CCCs to claim state apportionment funding for these students enrolled on or after July 1, 2015.

- Pending consideration in Senate Education.

AB 27 (Chávez)

This bill requires the state's public postsecondary educational institutions to exempt qualifying nonresident veterans from nonresident tuition and fee charges, in conformance with federal law. Specifically, this bill:

Requires the California Community Colleges (CCC) and the California State University (CSU), and requests the University of California (UC), by July 1, 2015, to adopt tuition policies ensuring participation of eligible veterans and their dependents in GI Bill education benefits and providing conformity with the federal Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 ("Choice Act").

- Pending consideration in Senate Education.

AB 421 (Calderon)

This bill requires:

- 1) Every community college district governing board to provide each of its colleges having 200 or more enrolled student veterans with a veterans' counselor.
- 2) The California Community College (CCC) Board of Governors (BOG) to adopt regulations establishing minimum qualifications for a veterans' counselor, and in doing so to consider specified requirements.

- Pending Assembly Appropriations.

SB 466 (Hill)

This bill requires the Board of Registered Nursing to do several things, including the following pertaining to veterans:

- 1) To ensure that its rules and regulations provide for methods of evaluating education, training, and experience obtained in military service if such training is applicable to the requirements of the particular profession or vocation regulated by the board.
 - 2) To evaluate for registered nurse licensure the training record submitted by any person who has served on active duty in the medical corps of any of the Armed Forces and completed the course of instruction required to qualify him or her for rating as a medical service technician--independent duty, or other equivalent rating in his particular branch, and whose service in the Armed Forces has been under honorable conditions.
- Signed by the Governor

Veterans Claims Representation/CVSOs/Strike Force

AB 75 (Mathis)

This bill continuously appropriates \$3 million General Fund (GF), each fiscal year, to the Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) for the purpose of funding 36 Veteran Claims Representative positions to ensure the quality and timeliness of claims filed through the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) on behalf of California veterans and their families.

- Pending consideration in Assembly Appropriations.

AB 171(Irwin)

This bill modifies the formula by which the Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) allocates state funds to county veterans service officers (CVSOs), and adds reporting requirements to help determine how effectively and efficiently state funds are being spent.

- Pending consideration on Senate Floor.

AB 393 (R. Hernández)

The bill establishes a grant program to support California Community Colleges (CCC) veterans' resource centers. Specifically, this bill:

- 1) Requires the Chancellor of the CCC to develop and administer the grant program. Community college districts may apply for grants for existing or planned centers to provide assistance to veterans and active duty Armed Forces members to help them succeed academically.
- 2) Provides that the program requirements may include funding priority to campuses providing matching funds.
- 3) Stipulates that funding for the program is subject to appropriation by the Legislature.
- 4) Requires the Chancellor to provide a progress report to the Legislature regarding the program by May 31, 2018.

- Pending Assembly Appropriations.

Veterans Employment & Entrepreneurship

AB 413 (Chávez)

This bill authorizes a spouse or child to enter into additional state contracts during the existing three-year designation extension following the death or permanent disability of an owner of a certified disabled veteran-owned business enterprise (DVBE). Existing law limits business activities to the completion of contracts entered into prior to death or permanent disability of the veteran owner.

- Signed by the Governor.

AB 1218 (Weber)

Makes significant adjustments to contracting performance goals and program participation reporting associated with the Disabled Veterans Business Enterprise (DVBE) Program.

- 1) Specifies that, in order to meet the 3% annual goal, an awarding department shall consider whether greater DVBE participation in excess of 3% should actually be required on contracts entered into for goods and services and for professional bond services.
- 2) Modifies the existing DVBE incentive program by establishing a greater participation incentive to the following:
 - a) A prime contractor who owns a DVBE and who has not previously entered into any contracts with the state as a prime contractor, rather than to a prime contractor who commits to entering into subcontracts with DVBEs;

- b) A DVBE that employs a workforce that is more than 50% veterans;
 - c) A DVBE that has not previously entered into any contracts with the state.
- 3) Requires the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) to maintain additional information relative to its promotional efforts of the DVBE program, as specified. Also, specifies that in order to track the effectiveness of the efforts to promote the DVBE program, CalVet must, at a minimum, include an annual comparison of the list of businesses participating in promotional efforts and those that become a prime contractor or subcontractor under the program so that the success of the promotional activities can be measured.
 - 4) Provides that a contractor that is not a DVBE yet subcontracts with DVBEs shall, when submitting its certification of expenditures to the awarding department, comply with either of the following: (a) provide on the certification of expenditures to the awarding department, the signature of any DVBE that performed work for the contractor acknowledging the authenticity of the expenditures or (b) provide the certification of expenditures to any DVBE that performed work for the contractor and proof of any amount of expenditures to that subcontractor.
 - 5) Requires awarding departments to maintain records of the information provided by the prime contractor, including but not limited to, the name of the prime contractor and subcontractor and the amount awarded to and the amount paid to, each prime and subcontractor. Also, requires awarding departments to establish review procedures to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the award amounts and the paid amounts reported.
 - 6) Makes other minor conforming changes and requires DGS to establish guidelines for reporting multiyear contracts.
- Pending consideration in Senate Appropriations.

AJR 37 (Mathis)

This resolution requests that the Congress of the United States of America further amend the GI Bill of Rights to make benefits available, with all appropriate safeguards, to all veterans for use as startup capital in the establishment of first businesses.

- Chaptered.

SB 159 (Nielsen)

Clarifies existing law, which requires an awarding department's goal achievement under the Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise (DVBE) program to be reported by overall dollar amount expended each year by the awarding department.:

- (1) Inserts references to two existing provisions of the Military and Veterans Code (MVC) and the Public Contract Code (PCC) that establish and define DVBE goals. (The references clarify that reporting on DVBE participation 3% goal achievement is to be in the same "dollars expended" metric that actually defines the 3% goal.)
- (2) Contains a legislative finding and declaration that this bill is clarifying and declaratory of existing law.

■ Pending in Assembly Veterans Affairs.

SB 221 (Jackson)

This bill permits state employees, who are military veterans with service-connected disabilities, to receive 96 hours of additional sick leave dedicated to health care treatment of those disabilities.

- 1) Enacts the California Wounded Warriors Transitional Leave Act.
- 2) Grants a state officer or employee, who is a military veteran with a service-connected disability rated at 30% or more by USDVA, and is hired on or after January 1, 2016, an additional credit for sick leave with pay of up to 96 hours.
- 3) Limits use of this sick leave to medical treatment of the employee's military service-connected disability.
- 4) Requires that this sick leave be credited on the first day of employment and remain available for use for the following 12 months of employment.
- 5) Prohibits this sick leave from being carried over after 12 months.
- 6) Permits employing agencies to require "submission of satisfactory proof" that the sick leave is being used for treatment of a service-connected disability, pursuant to rules adopted by the Department of Human Resources (CalHR).

■ Signed by the Governor.

Veterans Recreational Benefits

AB 240 (Wilk)

This bill provides free day use entry to state parks for vehicles with specified special recognition license plates:

- 1) Pearl Harbor Survivor – issued to Pearl Harbor survivors.
 - 2) Legion of Valor – issued to recipients of the Army Medal of Honor, Navy Medal of Honor, Air Force Medal of Honor, Air Force Cross, Navy Cross, or Army Distinguished Service Class. May be retained by a surviving spouse.
 - 3) Former Prisoner of War – issued to former prisoners of war.
 - 4) Congressional Medal of Honor – issued to recipients of a Congressional Medal of Honor. May be retained by a surviving spouse.
 - 5) Purple Heart Veteran- issued to veterans who recognized for being wounded in action. May be retained by a surviving spouse.
 - 6) Gold Star Family – issued to qualified family members whose relative lost their life in the line of duty while serving in the Armed Forces, including spouses, parents, children, siblings, grandparents, and grandchildren.
- Pending consideration in Senate Appropriations.

Administrative Support for Veterans

AB 778 (Maienschein)

This bill allows county recorders to provide certified copies of military discharge documents, when those documents are requested using any of the following methods: (1) In writing (mail); (2) facsimile machine (fax); (3) digitized image (email).

- Signed by the Governor.

Department of Veterans Affairs

AB 255 (Irwin)

This bill creates the office of Internal Audits for Veterans Affairs within the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet). Specifically, this bill:

- 1) subject to appointment by the Governor and confirmation by the Senate.
- 2) Requires the auditor to report to the CalVet secretary (secretary) and conduct reviews and investigations at the request of the secretary or other members of senior management.

- 3) Requires the auditor to report findings of employee misconduct to the secretary.
 - 4) Subjects the auditor to specified sections of Government Code related to internal auditors' independence and responsibilities.
 - 5) Allows the auditor to initiate a review or investigation of an alleged wrongdoing.
 - 6) Requires the auditor, beginning January 1, 2017, and each year thereafter, to submit an annual summary report to the California Veterans Board and relevant policy committees of the Legislature.
 - 7) Includes a January 1, 2020 sunset.
- Pending consideration in Assembly Appropriations.

AB 1029 (Frazier)

Requires CalVet to create a program to certify organizations that provide specified services to military veterans and their families:

- 1) Posits legislative findings and declarations supporting the establishment of a process for certifying veteran service providers.
 - 2) Defines "certified California veteran servicer provider" as an entity that certified by the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) as having an established history of providing supportive services, as specified and that meets all of specific requirements:
 - a) Provides supportive services to veterans and their families in at least three of the following areas: (1) housing assistance, (2) health, (3) mental health, (4) small business assistance, (5) employment assistance, and (6) job training.
 - b) Demonstrates the knowledge, experience, and cultural competency to provide supportive services to veterans and their families.
 - c) Demonstrates through audits and employment history the fiscal and management capacity to provide these services to veterans and their families.
 - d) Is a nonprofit organization that is exempt from federal income taxation as an organization described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.
- Pending consideration in Senate Appropriations.

Veterans Housing

AB 388 (Chang)

This bill requires the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), in collaboration with the Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) to include specified information relating to the effectiveness of the Veterans Housing and Homeless Prevention (VHHP) Bond Act of 2014 in an annual report, including information relating to the effectiveness of assisted projects in helping veterans occupying any supportive

housing or transitional housing development that was issued funds pursuant to the VHHP.

- Signed by the Governor.

SB 130 (Roth)

Requires specified state departments to establish and implement a grant process that will fund supportive services, as defined, for veterans, who reside in housing provided by the State via the Veterans Housing and Homelessness Prevention (VHHP) Act.

- Pending consideration in Senate Veterans Affairs.

SB 384 (Leyva)

To help meet the specific housing needs of underserved veterans, this bill sets aside a percentage of any state funds being used to acquire, construct, rehabilitate or preserve multifamily housing units for veterans, in general:

- 1) For all multifamily housing units acquired, constructed, rehabilitated, or preserved on or after January 1, 2016, for the purpose of housing veterans, a percentage of the state funds to be used shall be reserved to provide housing for underserved veterans.
- 2) Requires the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) to determine the functional definition of “underserved veterans” based on the needs of veterans at the time funding is awarded.
- 3) Requires CalVet, in consultation with the appropriate local agencies, to determine the percentage of housing funds set aside for underserved veterans.

- Pending consideration by Senate Transportation & Housing.

SB 689 (Huff)

This bill requires state agencies to prioritize projects under the Veterans Housing and Homeless Prevention Act of 2014 that, for the purposes of providing mental health and drug services, either: 1) accept only residents that are prequalified to receive services from the US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), or 2) if they accept residents who receive services from agencies other than the VA, employ on staff or contract for a qualified mental health professional with at least two years’ full-time relevant experience providing services to veterans.

- Pending consideration in Senate Transportation & Housing.

State Veterans Homes

SB 543 (Wolk)

With regard to the Veterans Home of California system, this bill creates a single system-wide Morale, Welfare, and Recreation Fund (MWR Fund) that consolidates existing and future MWR moneys generated by individual veterans home campuses, and establishes procedures for and restrictions on the budgeting and spending of moneys in the Fund.

- Pending consideration in Assembly Veteran Affairs Committee.

Issues/Benefits re Currently Serving Military (Active Duty, Guard, Reserve, Dependents)

AB 442 (Irwin)

This bill:

- 1) Codifies the Governor's Military Council, under the direction of the CMD.
 - 2) Provides for appointment to the Council by the Governor.
 - 3) Requires the appointments to include, but not be limited to, bipartisan representatives from both houses of the Legislature.
 - 4) Self-repeals on January 1, 2021.
- Signed by the Governor.

AB 583 (Chávez)

This bill extends existing employment and reemployment protections to members of national guards of other states, when they must leave positions of private employment within California, due to having been called onto active state service by other states' Governors or onto active federal service by the President of the United States.

- Signed by the Governor.

AB 930 (Irwin and Atkins)

This bill codifies the authorization for the existing Work for Warriors (WFW) program, which provides direct placement job services to unemployed and underemployed military service members, veterans, graduates of state military youth programs, military families, and other related populations in California.

- Pending consideration on Senate Floor.

AB 1401 (Baker)

This bill requests the Office of the Adjutant General (OTAG) to provide specified assistance, regarding higher education, to members of the California National Guard (CNG), State Military Reserve (SMR), and Naval Militia, who do not have a baccalaureate degree.

- 1) Requests OTAG to, among other things, make copies of the enrollment fee waiver application of the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges and the FAFSA available to each member of the CNG, SMR, and Naval Militia not having a baccalaureate degree.
- 2) Requests OTAG to assist these persons in completing these forms, as needed.
- 3) Requests that OTAG also make available additional information regarding the federal Post-9/11 GI Bill and the state's California National Guard Education Assistance Award Program (CNGEAAP) program, and contact information for veterans' educational assistance.

■ Signed by the Governor.

AJR 11 (Burke)

This resolution memorializes the President and Congress of the United States to recognize the unique military value of California's defense installations and the disproportionate sacrifices California endured in previous base realignment and closure (BRAC) rounds.

■ Chaptered.

SB 111 (Fuller)

This bill:

- 1) Expresses the intent of the Legislature that assistance be provided to school districts in the 2015-16 Fiscal Year to meet the matching share requirement of a school construction grant made by the Office of Economic Adjustment of the federal Department of Defense to construct, renovate, repair, or expand elementary and secondary public schools located on military installations.
- 2) Requires the Department of Finance to explore options on how best to assist school districts in meeting the matching share requirement of the federal school construction grant. Requires the options to include, but not necessarily be limited to, making low-interest loans available to school districts through the California Infrastructure and Economic Development Bank.

SB 121 (Fuller)

This bill requires that school construction projects on military installations that are eligible for specified federal grants are given priority for funding under the State School Facility program.

Pending Senate Committee on Education

SB 193 (Committee on Veterans Affairs)

This bill cleans up portions of the Military and Veterans Code by deleting outdated references to federal executive orders and statutes (which the State borrows to define military law for the active state militia), and by adding updated references to federal law.

- Signed by the Governor.

SB 506 (Fuller)

This bill:

- 1) Establishes a process for the designation of a local retention authority to serve as the lead local government entity responsible for efforts to retain local military installations;
- 2) Creates the Military and Aerospace Program under the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz) to address concerns relating to state and local defense retention, base conversion and base reuse activities; and
- 3) Establishes the Space Enterprise Development Program within GO-Biz to foster activities that increase the competitiveness of space enterprise in California, including the commercial use of space, space vehicle launches, space launch infrastructure, manufacturing, applied research, technology development, economic diversification, and business development.

- Pending consideration by Senate Appropriations.

SB 536 (Roth)

This bill:

- 1) Requires the Department of General Services (DGS) to draw on funds in the Property Acquisition Law Money Account (PAL Account) in order to pay for ongoing costs associated with the marketing and sales of unused National Guard armories.
- 2) Requires net proceeds from the sale or lease of an armory to be deposited into the Armory Fund.

- 3) Authorizes the Director of DGS, with the approval of the TAG, to sell seven specific armories. (Listed below under Background.
- Signed by the Governor.