

Assembly Committee on Veterans Affairs
2019-2020 Legislative Summary



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Assembly Committee on Veterans Affairs

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BILLS SENT TO GOVERNOR AND ENACTED RESOLUTIONS:

ASSEMBLY BILLS

AB 240 (Irwin)

Chapter 61, Statutes of 2020

Veterans' homes: lease of property.

Limits a lease of real property at a California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) Veterans' Home to five years, except under specified conditions, requires that any use of property at a Veterans Home meet specified criteria, including that it provides a benefit to the home and its members, and be governed by a written agreement.

AB 361 (Voepel)

Chapter 86, Statutes of 2019

Military Department: support programs.

Authorizes the Adjutant General California and the Military Department to enter into agreements with specified entities, including nonprofit and military or veteran foundations, to spend money from the California Military Department Support Fund, and to accept in-kind donations.

AB 368 (Quirk-Silva)

Chapter 284, Statutes of 2019

Southern California Veterans Cemetery.

Changes the specific Orange County location authorized in statute for a prospective Southern California Veterans Cemetery to either the Marine Corps Air Station El Toro or the Golf Course Site in the Orange County Great Park in the City of Irvine. This bill also requires the Department of Veterans Affairs to complete acquisition studies on both sites and consult with the Department of General Services to determine which site to pursue.

AB 408 (Frazier)

Chapter 42, Statutes of 2020

Vehicles: disabled veterans.

Allows the Department of Motor Vehicles to accept a certificate certifying a veteran is disabled for the purpose of a disability license plate from a County Veteran Service Officer or the Department of Veteran Affairs. Expands the definition of disabled veteran to include a combined service-connected disability rating of 100 percent, or rated permanently and totally disabled based on individual employability.

AB 498 (Weber)

Chapter 227, Statutes of 2019

Business licensing: fees: exemptions: veterans.

Exempts a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces who has been honorably discharged and is a California resident from paying any state or local business license fees to license a business that sells or provides services, provided the veteran is the sole proprietor of the business.

AB 550 (Flora)**Vetoed***Veterans: Medical Foster Home Pilot Program.*

Authorizes, as a pilot project until January 1, 2023, a United States Department of Veterans Affairs facility to establish medical foster homes for older and medically frail veterans that are not subject to licensure or regulation under the California Residential Care Facilities for the Elderly Act.

AB 653 (Bloom, Kamlager-Dove)**Chapter 263, Statutes of 2019***State armories.*

Allows the state to lease a portion of the West Los Angeles Armory for as long as 25 years to Los Angeles County with the requirements that the lease to be at fair market value for a bridge housing program, that the initial lease will be for five years with the option for four extensions of five additional years each, and that the County, if it enters a lease, must pay the state Department of General Services for its costs related to the lease.

AB 761 (Nazarian)**Chapter 338, Statutes of 2019***State armories: homeless shelters.*

This bill allows, at the sole discretion of the Adjutant General, the use of any armory deemed vacant by the California Military Department throughout the year by the county or city in which the armory is located for the purpose of providing temporary shelter from hazardous weather conditions for homeless persons.

AB 1365 (Committee on Veterans Affairs)**Chapter 689, Statutes of 2019***Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise Program.*

Requires a California Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise Program awarding department to maintain all records of the information provided by the prime contractor pursuant to these provisions and to retain the records for a minimum of 6 years after collection. The bill would direct the awarding department to establish appropriate review procedures for those records to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the award amounts and paid amounts reported.

AB 2192 (Committee on Veterans Affairs)**Chapter 74, Statutes of 2020***Governor's Military Council.*

Extends the repeal date for the Governor's Military Council that advises the Governor on efforts to retain military installations and operations within the state, to January 1, 2026.

AB 2193 (Committee on Veterans Affairs)**Chapter 97, Statutes of 2020***Military: State Guard.*

Changes the name of the State Military Reserve to the State Guard, and makes technical changes.

AB 3371 (Committee on Veterans Affairs)**Chapter 77, Statutes of 2020***Veteran suicides: report.*

Requires the State Department of Public Health to include information on counties of residence of veterans, and to include a cross-tabulation of data, in the annual report on veteran suicide in California. This bill also requires the report to be submitted to the Legislature and the Department of Veterans Affairs on or before March 15 of each year.

SENATE BILLS

SB 289 (Archuleta)

Chapter 846, Statutes of 2019

Medi-Cal: home and community-based services: military.

Requires an active duty military service member's dependent child or spouse, who is eligible, enrolled, or on the waiting list for specified Medi-Cal waiver programs, to retain eligibility or waiting list status if the military service member receives a military order to transfer to another state. Also authorizes a dependent child or spouse to apply for the specified waiver programs when a military service member residing in another state receives a military order to move to California.

SB 481 (Umberg)

Chapter 704, Statutes of 2019

State military: inspector general.

Requires the Inspector General be an advisor to the Governor and responsive to the Adjutant General, and also makes updates to the "California Military Whistleblower Protection Act" and includes disciplinary actions against any member of the department who intentionally violate such protections.

SB 644 (Glazer)

Chapter 602, Statutes of 2019

Tenancy: security deposit: service members.

Prohibits, with certain exceptions, active service members from having to pay a security deposit of more than one month's rent for an unfurnished rental property and two months' rent for a furnished rental property.

SJR 7 (Glazer)

Res. Chapter 102, Statutes of 2019

Military and veterans.

Urges the United States Congress to act favorably in regard to legislation to award the Congressional Gold Medal to the Merrill's Marauders.

BILLS IN LEGISLATURE:

The following bills, if enacted would do the following:

ASSEMBLY BILLS

AB 21 (Obernolte)

Driver's licenses: veteran designation.

Removes the one-time \$5 fee to a person applying for a driver's license or identification card with a veteran designation after July 1, 2020.

Assembly Com. on V.A. from committee: Do pass and re-refer to Com. on APPR. (Ayes 11. Noes 0.) (March 26). Re-referred to Com. on APPR. In committee: Set, first hearing. Referred to APPR. Suspense file. In committee: Held under submission (May 16). From Committee: Filed with Chief Clerk pursuant to Joint Rule 56 (March 3).

AB 55 (Eduardo Garcia)

Department of Veterans Affairs: veterans' services.

Establishes a continuous appropriation – for each fiscal year commencing July 1, 2019 – of \$11 million from the General Fund to the Department of Veterans Affairs and makes it available for allocation to counties to fund the activities of county veterans service officers.

Assembly Com. on V.A. from committee: Do pass and re-refer to Com. on APPR. (Ayes 11. Noes 0.) (March 26). Re-referred to Com. on APPR. In committee: Set, first hearing. Referred to APPR. Suspense file. In committee: Held under submission (May 16). From Committee: Filed with Chief Clerk pursuant to Joint Rule 56 (March 3).

AB 160 (Voepel)

Employment policy: voluntary veterans' preference.

Enacts the “Voluntary Veterans’ Preference Employment Policy Act” to authorize a private employer to establish and maintain a veteran’ preference employment policy.

In Senate. Read first time. To Com. on RLS. for assignment (March 23). Referred to Coms. on JUD. and V.A. (March 29). In committee: Set, first hearing. Failed passage. Reconsideration granted (July 2). From Senate committee without further action (November 30).

AB 200 (Patterson)

State veterans cemeteries: Hmong veterans.

Authorizes the remains of a person who was naturalized pursuant to the federal Hmong Veterans’ Naturalization Act of 2000, and who resided in the State of California at the time of the person’s death, be buried in a California state-operated veterans cemetery.

Referred to Assembly Committee on V.A. Coauthors revised (Feb 8). From Committee: Filed with Chief Clerk pursuant to Joint Rule 56 (March 3).

AB 694 (Irwin)

Veterans Housing and Homeless Prevention Bond Act of 2020.

Enacts the Veterans Housing and Homeless Prevention Bond Act of 2022 to authorize the issuance of bonds in an amount not to exceed \$600,000,000 to provide additional funding for the Veterans Housing and Homeless Prevention program. The California Housing Finance Agency, the Department of Housing and Community Development, and the Department of Veterans

Affairs will coordinate to provide housing to veterans and their families pursuant to the Veterans Housing and Homeless Prevention Act of 2014

Referred to Senate Com. on Appr (August 13). In committee: Hearing postponed by committee. In committee: Referred to Appr. Suspense file. In committee: Held under submission (August 30). From Senate committee without further action (November 30).

AB 1376 (Ramos, Reyes)

Civil service: veterans' preference: background checks.

Requires a state agency that hires for a position in cybersecurity that requires a background check to apply the veterans' preference and to establish a uniform hiring policy for veterans who have held a security clearance in the last year and have left the military in good standing or were honorably discharged.

Ordered to the Senate (May 16). Referred to Com. on Appropriations (June 26). In committee: Referred to suspense file (August 12). In committee: Held under submission (August 30). From Senate committee without further action.

AB 1911 (Maienschein)

State agencies: veterans.

Requires that every state agency that requests on any written form, written publication, or through its internet website, whether the person is a veteran, to include questions on its intake forms to determine whether an applicant is affiliated with the United States Armed Forces, and to request permission from that person to transmit their contact information to the Department of Veterans Affairs. If the applicant has consented to be contacted about military, veterans, family member, or survivor benefits, this bill requires each state agency to electronically transmit the specified information to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Referred to Committee on V.A. (January 17). From committee without further action (November 30).

AB 1935 (Voepel)

Veterans: mental health.

Requires the Department of Veterans Affairs to establish a program to fund, upon appropriation by the Legislature, an academic study of mental health among women veterans in California, as specified. The bill would require the department to submit a report summarizing the findings and recommendations of the study to the Legislature no later than July 31, 2022.

Referred to Senate Committee on V.A. (July 1). From Senate committee without further action (November 30).

AB 2075 (Kiley)

Veterans: Veterans' Homes.

Requires the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide information and links on its internet website for alternative services that may meet the needs of, or better serve, homeless veterans and their families.

Amended outside of V.A. committee jurisdiction (March 12). Re-referred to Com. on RLS pursuant to Assembly Rule 96 (March 16). From committee without further action (November 30)

AB 2128 (Flora, Berman)

Veterans: Medical Foster Home Pilot Program.

#establishes the Medical Foster Home Pilot Program until January 1, 2024, under which a United States Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) facility may establish a medical foster home that is not subject to licensure or regulation as a residential care facility for the elderly, a community care facility, or a residential care facility for persons with chronic, life-threatening illness, pursuant to specified federal requirements. The bill would require a USDVA facility establishing the home to agree to be subject to the jurisdiction of the California State Auditor, and would require a medical foster home caregiver or an individual, other than a veteran resident, who is over 18 years of age and is residing in the medical foster home to be a registered independent home care aide, as specified. The bill would state the intent of the Legislature that the California State Auditor, in response to a request to the Joint Legislative Audit Committee, conduct an audit evaluating the pilot program created by this bill no sooner than January 1, 2022, as specified.

Referred to Com. on V.A. (February 20). From committee without further action (November 30).

AB 2281 (Voepel)

State parks: veterans: free access.

Requires the Department of Parks and Recreation to grant free access to a unit of the state park system to a veteran of the Armed Forces of the United States who is a resident of this state and who, upon entrance to the unit, presents to department personnel government-issued proof of the veteran's service in the Armed Forces of the United States.

Referred to Coms. On V.A. and W., P., & W. (February 27). From committee without further action (November 30).

AB 2349 (Irwin)

Veterans' homes: leases.

Creates the Veterans' Home Fund and would require moneys received in connection with the leasing or letting of a home to be deposited in the Veterans' Home Fund. The bill would provide that money in the fund is available, upon appropriation by the Legislature, for the maintenance of existing homes and for the acquisition or construction of new or replacement homes, as specified.

Referred to Com. on V.A. (February 24). From committee without further action (November 30).

AB 2688 (Cervantes)

Veterans: veterans service officers.

Appropriates \$11,000,000 on July 1, 2020, and annually thereafter, from the General Fund to the department for allocation to counties for county veterans service officers based upon a workload unit performance formula to be developed by the department. This bill would also require the department to develop performance metrics to demonstrate the effective use of appropriated funds. Finally, this bill would require the department to submit the annual report of county veterans service officer activities by November 15 of each year, and to include the new performance metrics within the report.

Referred to Com. on V.A. (March 2). From committee without further action (November 30).

AB 2994 (Gloria)

Veterans: discharge upgrades.

Establishes a grant program to be administered by the California Department of Veterans Affairs that will fund service providers to educate veterans about discharge upgrades and help veterans file discharge upgrade applications. The bill would specify that funding for the grant program is subject to appropriation by the Legislature.

Referred to Com. on V.A. (March 5). From committee without further action (November 30).

AB 3104 (Kiley)

Civil service: veterans' preference.

Requires that a department or designated appointing authority shall use a document signed by the applicant's commanding officer of the military to facilitate a request for Veterans' preference by a currently serving active duty member of the United States Armed Forces in order to verify that applicant's military service.

Referred to Coms. On V.A. and P.E. & R. (March 9). From committee without further action (November 30).

AB 3183 (Irwin)

Veterans: education.

Limits the ability of the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide for a veteran's education to educational institutions in California. Also makes other technical, nonsubstantive changes to the provision.

Referred to Com. on V.A. (March 9). From committee without further action (November 30).

AJR 20 (Patterson)

State veterans cemeteries: Hmong veterans.

Urges the United States Congress and the President of the United States to permit states to extend burial and memorial benefits to Hmong veterans at state veterans cemeteries.

In Senate. Re-referred to Committee on V.A.

SENATE BILLS

SB 312 (Leyva)

Veterans: service dog assistance.

Requires the Department of Veterans Affairs, upon appropriation by the Legislature, to establish a competitive grant program to award grants to certified veteran service dog providers to provide assistance for the cost of service dogs to veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder.

Amended to pertain to Cosmetic Fragrance and Flavor Ingredient Right to Know Act of 2020, out of Committee jurisdiction.

SB 500 (Morrell)

Veterans' education.

Requires the Department of Veterans Affairs to establish an education assistance program to provide housing and tuition assistance to disabled veterans attending graduate school in the State of California if their eligibility for federal education assistance has expired.

Referred to Assembly Committee on Appr. Set for first hearing. Placed on Appr. Suspense file (August 21). Held in committee and under submission (August 30). From Assembly without further action (November 30).

SB 501 (Hurtado)

Armories: Reedley Armory.

Removes the Director of the Department of General Services authorization to sell the Reedley Armory.

Referred to Assembly Coms. On V.A. and A. & A.R. (June 6). Set for first hearing canceled at the request of the author (June 18). From Assembly without further action (November 30).

SB 663 (Jones)

Property taxation: exemptions: veterans' organizations.

Extends the application of the "veterans' organization" property tax exemption to real property owned by certain veterans' organizations and used for fraternal, lodge or social club purposes, as specified, excluding the bar area, for lien dates occurring between January 1, 2020, and December 31, 2029.

From V.A. committee: Do pass and re-refer to Com. on APPR. (July 10). Placed on APPR. Suspense file (August 14). From Assembly without further action (November 30).

SB 725 (Rubio)

Veterans rental housing.

Requires the Department of Veterans Affairs to establish a rental housing assistance program to provide financial assistance to veterans seeking rental housing, based on the needs of the veterans. Requires the department to coordinate the program with existing state and federal veterans services and to provide detailed information about the program in a publication.

Referred to Com. on V.A. (June 6). Hearing canceled at the request of the author (June 18). From Assembly without further action (November 30).

SB 1177 (Rubio)

Veterans' Home of California system.

Requires the Department of Veterans Affairs to promulgate regulations that define the types of short-term uses of Veterans' home property that are in the best interests of the homes, including the residents. The bill would prohibit the department from approving short-term use agreements that do not meet that definition. The bill would require all short-term use agreements to include conditions that protect the state's best interests. Finally, the bill would also require the department to develop and implement a fee schedule for short-term third-party uses of veterans' home property.

Referred to Com. on V.A. (June 18). From Assembly without further action (November 30).