



Assemblymember Rudy Salas, 32nd District
AB 1596 (MATHIS/SALAS) – VETERAN SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS
 FACT SHEET

ISSUE

Of California’s 1.8 million veterans, it is estimated that 800,000 of them are not aware that they are eligible for federal veterans benefits, and up to \$945 million in federal funding is lost annually. These benefits can be substantial and critical to the well-being of the veteran.

In FY 1-15, over \$6.4 billion was paid directly to California veterans. While this number is impressive, studies have shown that California’s veterans are underutilizing their federal benefits. Comparisons to other comparable states like Florida and Texas show that many of California’s veterans are not getting the benefits and services they earned as a result of their military service.

Congressionally Chartered Veterans Service Organizations (VSO’s) provide a myriad of services to veterans and the community and also employ accredited Veterans Service Officers. These Veterans Service Officers are trained professionals that assist veterans apply for their federal veterans benefits.

EXISTING LAW

Existing law authorizes the department to cooperate and contract with any VSO for the purpose of assisting veterans in their claims.

The state does not currently appropriate funds to make grants available to VSO’s.

However, fourteen other states facilitate veterans claims assistance by VSO’s and appropriate money from their General Funds to make grants available.

SUPPORT

- California Association of County Veterans Service Officers
- American G.I. Forum
- American Legion-Department of CA
- AMVETS-Department of CA
- Military Order of the Purple Heart-Department of CA
- Veterans of Foreign Wars-Department of CA
- Vietnam Veterans of America-CA State Council Association of the United States Army-Department of CA
- CA State Commanders Veterans Council
- Jewish War Veterans, Department of CA
- Military Officers Association of America-CA Council of Chapters
- Reserve Officers Association-Department of the Golden West
- Scottish American Military Society in CA
- California State Association of Counties
- Rural County Representatives of California
- Ventura County Board of Supervisors

THIS BILL

AB 1596 will help VSO’s in their mission of assisting veterans by making \$3 million in one-time funding available to a competitive grant program to be administered by the California Department of Veterans Affairs.

The implementation of competitive grants will ensure California veterans receive the benefits they have earned by virtue of their military service.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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