

CACVSO STATE LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM FOR THE 2017-2018 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

ADDITIONAL LOCAL ASSISTANCE FUNDING FOR CVSOS

In 2018, the California Association of County Veterans Service Officers (CACVSO) is sponsoring legislation to raise the state's Local Assistance to counties for CVSO offices from the current \$5.6 million funding level to \$7 million. Also, the eventual goal is to fully fund CVSOS by permanently appropriating \$16 million in Local Assistance funding, which would bring the state in line with paying half of the funding actually needed to operate CVSOS throughout the state. Currently, the counties pick up the majority of the funding. It was originally intended that the state and counties equally share in this cost. As part of this legislative effort, the CACVSO will continue to educate the Governor's Office, the Legislature, and the public on the importance and value of County Veterans Service Officers.

CALIFORNIA'S EIGHT VETERANS HOMES

Support ongoing efforts to update the Military and Veterans Code concerning all aspects related to California veterans homes to ensure that all veterans in all homes are treated equally. California has gone from one veterans home (Yountville, est. 1884) to its eight current veterans homes. The Military and Veterans Code has not been updated to establish uniform procedures since before the new homes were opened.
State Agency Coordination

Support legislation that would require state agencies to coordinate with the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) to improve state services provided to veterans. Many state agencies are involved in administering services to veterans. Improved coordination between agencies would allow veterans to more easily access these services, and would also allow the CVSOS to better assist veterans.

OTHER LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES, 2017-18 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Support legislation that would create a Governor's Memorial Certificate similar to the Presidential Memorial Certificate. Include information directing survivors to the CVSOS.

Support legislation that would provide state income tax relief to retirement pay of military retirees.

Support legislation that would require an individual, who is assisting a veteran with filing a claim for benefits, to notify that veteran if they are not a VA-accredited representative, and make it a criminal offense to intentionally misdirect or mislead a veteran, or anyone acting on a veteran's behalf, concerning benefits or entitlements for their own monetary gain.

Support legislation that would expand laws to prevent dishonest vendors and businesses that prey on or scam veterans and active duty military personnel by criminalizing their activities.

Support legislation that would continue to support expansion of veterans

treatment courts to more counties by providing state funding of veterans' treatment courts in California.

Support legislation that would reform the current system of property tax relief for disabled veterans by raising the current state dollar limitation on property tax relief for disabled veterans.

Support legislation that would reduce property tax assessment on veterans service organizations' posts and chapters.

Support legislation that would support the awarding of state grants through CalVet to veterans service organizations and veterans service agencies that provide claims assistance and outreach to California veterans.

Support legislation that would restore the veterans-only specialized license plate, so that there would be two plates available for sale — "Veteran" and "Honoring Veterans."

Support legislation that would criminalize the vandalism and destruction of veterans', police, fire and first responders' memorials, monuments and graves.

Support legislation to ensure that federal Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) and Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA) protections are also in state law and supersede any binding arbitration contracts.

Support legislation that would expand Prop. 63 mental health funding support for veterans suffering from homelessness and mental health issues.

Fund state-sponsored veterans' resource centers at state community colleges and universities (CSU and UC systems).

Support legislation that would increase transparency in asbestos claims cases that affect veterans who were exposed to asbestos while in the service, so that there will be funds available for future claims by veterans.

Support legislation that would create a Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) between CalVet Veterans Homes and Veterans Service Organization (VSOs) to provide volunteers to the state veterans homes similar to the federal Veterans Administration Volunteer Service (VAVS) program.

Support legislation that would require that California Disabled Veterans Business Enterprises (DVBES) hire more disabled and non-disabled veterans. Currently, there is no requirement for DVBES to hire veterans.

Support the legislative priorities of the state veterans service organizations that are in-line with our own legislative priorities.

CACVSO TOP FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES, 2018

Support legislation that would provide increased access for CVSOs to USDVA information systems (i.e., VBMS, VACOLS, SHARE, MAPD, etc.) for use in developing and monitoring claims submitted on behalf of veterans, regardless of VA Power-of Attorney (POA), to USDVA client and claims databases. Enhancing this

access will result in better, timelier services to claimants and reduce the workload in USDVA call centers.

Support legislative, regulatory or policy changes that would create a federal/state/local government partnership to reduce the USDVA veterans claims backlog and expand outreach services to veterans.

Support legislation that would authorize USDVA pharmacies to honor prescriptions written by non-USDVA physicians. Currently, the USDVA medical system will only provide prescription medication to eligible veterans if the prescription is written by a USDVA physician.

Support legislation that would eliminate the Means Test for veterans to qualify for USDVA medical care. These income limitations have excluded some veterans, who would otherwise qualify for enrollment, from obtaining their primary healthcare through the USDVA.

OTHER FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES, 2018

Support legislation that would include “Blue Water Navy” veterans into the set of veterans with presumed exposure to Agent Orange.

Support legislation that would provide for payment of Concurrent Retirement and Disability Pay (CRDP) for all military retirees, regardless of the percentage of their service-connected disabilities.

Support legislation that would eliminate Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP)-Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) offset.

Support legislation, regulatory or policy changes which expand/increase USDVA responsibility to educate veterans on their entitlements.

Support legislation that would provide for a pro-rata additional allowance for dependents for all levels of compensation.

Support legislation that would authorize states with Departments of Veterans Affairs that are accredited with the USDVA to cross-accredit CVSOs for other states.

Support legislation that would eliminate the requirement for war-time service as an eligibility requirement for non-service connected and death pension.

Support legislation that would reduce the eligibility criteria for veterans to meet Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) program requirements.

Support legislation that would expand the eligibility criteria for USDVA Dental Services for veterans eligible for USDVA Healthcare.