

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 30, 2002

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 17, 2002

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2001–02 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 2559

Introduced by Assembly Member Wesson
(Principal coauthor: Assembly Member Runner)
(Principal coauthor: Senator O’Connell)

February 21, 2002

An act to add Section 1104.1 to the Military and Veterans Code, relating to veterans, and making an appropriation therefor.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

AB 2559, as amended, Wesson. Veterans’ Home of California.

The Veterans’ Homes Bond Act of 2000 requires the proceeds from the sale of the bonds issued under that act to be deposited in a newly established Veterans’ Home Fund. That act provides that upon appropriation by the Legislature, the moneys in that fund are to be allocated first to meet state funding requirements for the renovation or construction of those veterans’ homes identified by a specified statute, and then to fund any additional homes established pursuant to the bond act.

This bill would continuously appropriate the moneys in the Veterans’ Home Fund, without regard to fiscal years and in an amount not to exceed an unspecified limit, to meet state funding requirements for the construction of veterans’ homes, located in the City of Lancaster and in the community of Saticoy, that are identified by the same specified

statute, and a veterans’ home located in West Los Angeles, that is an additional home established pursuant to the bond act.

This bill would state the intent of the Legislature in enacting these provisions.

This bill would provide that it would become operative only if SB 1234 is enacted and becomes effective on or before January 1, 2003.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: yes. Fiscal committee: yes. State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the
2 following:

3 (a) With respect to veterans in general, the Legislature finds
4 and declares all of the following:

5 (1) Over 1,000 United States veterans who fought in World
6 War II die every day.

7 (2) More veterans live in California than in any other state in
8 the nation. Of the nation’s 25,229,000 veterans, 2,367,700 of them
9 live in California, or 9.3 percent. Additionally, 596,500 more
10 veterans live in California than in any other state in the nation.

11 (3) California has been identified by the United States
12 Department of Veterans Affairs as one of the three states with a
13 “great need” for veterans’ homes. The fiscal year 2002 United
14 States Department of Veterans Affairs veterans’ home bed analysis
15 lists the current need in California as 3,167 beds.

16 (4) The highest concentration of veterans are in the 53 to 58
17 years age range and are Vietnam-era veterans. There are
18 approximately 800,000 Vietnam-era veterans in California who
19 may need care soon.

20 (5) There are presently 430,800 Korean War-era veterans
21 between the ages of 66 and 75 years in California who are at the
22 prime age to receive care now.

23 (6) Approximately 18 million of the United States’ 25 million
24 veterans served the country during wartime.

25 (b) With respect to a veterans’ home at Lancaster, the
26 Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

27 (1) There are over 300,000 eligible veterans living in the
28 60-mile service area of the Lancaster veterans’ homesite.



1 (2) The Antelope Valley boasts a vibrant military community
2 with a rich military and aerospace tradition. Lancaster is in the
3 heart of the Antelope Valley, which is home to Edwards Air Force
4 Base, Air Force Plant 42, NASA Dryden, Phillips Rocket
5 Propulsion Laboratory, Boeing’s Phantomworks facility,
6 Northrup-Gruman’s B-2 production facility, and the legendary
7 Lockheed Martin Skunkworks facility.

8 (3) The Lancaster veterans’ homesite is within an hour drive of
9 two Veterans Affairs hospitals, and in emergencies, is within a
10 five-mile radius of three acute care hospitals. The Antelope Valley
11 Hospital employs nearly 700 skilled nurses and the Antelope
12 Valley Community College graduates over 200 registered nurses,
13 LVNs, and medical technicians each year.

14 (c) With respect to a veterans’ home at Saticoy, the Legislature
15 finds and declares all of the following:

16 (1) Ventura County has been home to three major naval
17 installations since the 1940s. Presently, Ventura County is home to
18 Point Mugu Naval Air Station and Port Hueneme United States
19 Naval Construction Battalion Center. Also located near the
20 Saticoy site is Vandenberg Air Force Base in Santa Barbara
21 County, as well as Camp Roberts and Camp San Luis Obispo in
22 San Luis Obispo County.

23 (2) The Tri-Counties Region supports a veterans population of
24 134,000. The Ventura County veterans services organization
25 estimates that there are 70,000 veterans living in Ventura County
26 alone. Another 34,000 veterans reside in Santa Barbara County
27 and 30,000 veterans reside in San Luis Obispo County.

28 (3) Ventura College has one of the largest nursing programs in
29 the state. Presently, there are 168 students enrolled in the Ventura
30 College nursing program. Oxnard and Moorpark Colleges also
31 have viable nursing programs and are located in Ventura County.

32 (4) The Saticoy site boasts easy access to a variety of veterans
33 services. The veterans outpatient clinics at Oxnard, Santa Barbara,
34 San Luis Obispo, Sepulveda, and the West Los Angeles Veterans
35 Hospital are all in close proximity to the Saticoy site.

36 (d) With respect to a veterans’ home at West Los Angeles, the
37 Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

38 (1) The Governor’s Commission on California Veterans
39 Homes enthusiastically recommends the West Los Angeles
40 veterans homesite, stating—“It is the majority opinion of the



1 Commission members that the best site in the State for a Veterans
2 Home is located on the property at the Greater Los Angeles
3 Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Los Angeles.”

4 (2) There are 690,600 veterans that presently reside in Los
5 Angeles County. There are more veterans living in Los Angeles
6 County than in San Francisco, San Diego, San Bernardino, Santa
7 Barbara, Riverside, and Ventura Counties combined.

8 (3) One-third of California’s ~~veterans~~ *veterans*’ population
9 resides in either Los Angeles or Orange County. According to the
10 United States Department of Veterans Affairs, the unmet need just
11 for this area is estimated at 1,700 beds.

12 (4) The Los Angeles site has the potential to become a “Center
13 of Excellence” for the California veterans’ home system. The Los
14 Angeles site is located one-half mile from the Veterans Affairs
15 Greater Los Angeles Health Care System (GLAHS). The GLAHS
16 is the largest medical center in the Veterans Affairs health care
17 system and has the broadest range of clinical care, education, and
18 research programs available. The Los Angeles site will showcase
19 a much-needed primary Alzheimer’s and dementia care facility.
20 Affiliation with UCLA and USC medical centers assures the
21 highest quality of medical care for Los Angeles veterans’ home
22 residents. More than 250 GLAHS staff are UCLA or USC medical
23 faculty members and over 270 UCLA and USC faculty are listed
24 as having primary interest in geriatrics or gerontology.

25 (5) The population and resources of the metropolitan Los
26 Angeles area provide a large pool of highly qualified staff
27 candidates. The proposed Veterans’ Home, Los Angeles would
28 have access to a pool of excellent candidates for all required
29 support positions, including physicians, nurses, pharmacists,
30 physical therapists, and administrative personnel.

31 (e) With respect to the need for more veterans’ homes in
32 California, the Legislature notes all of the following
33 recommendations of the Governor’s Commission on California
34 Veterans Homes:

35 (1) Recommendation one by the Governor’s Commission on
36 California Veterans Homes states: Immediate action is necessary.
37 The commission urges the Governor and the Legislature to take
38 action on construction of veterans homes by building concurrently
39 as many as possible.



1 (2) Recommendation two by the Governor’s Commission on
2 California Veterans Homes states: It is the majority opinion of the
3 commission members that the best site in the state for a veterans
4 home is located on the property at the Greater Los Angeles
5 Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Los Angeles.

6 (3) Recommendation five by the Governor’s Commission on
7 California Veterans Homes states: Build the primary Alzheimer’s
8 and dementia care facility at the Greater Los Angeles Veterans
9 Affairs Medical Center.

10 SEC. 2. Section 1104.1 is added to the Military and Veterans
11 Code, to read:

12 1104.1. (a) Notwithstanding Section 13340 of the
13 Government Code, the moneys in the Veterans’ Home Fund
14 established by Section 1103 are, subject to the limit set forth in
15 subdivision (b), hereby continuously appropriated, without regard
16 to fiscal years, to the Department of Veterans Affairs for the
17 funding of the state’s matching requirement for the construction of
18 all of the following:

19 (1) The Veterans’ Home of California, Lancaster, as described
20 in paragraph (4) of subdivision (b) of Section 1011.

21 (2) The Veterans’ Home of California, Saticoy, as described in
22 paragraph (5) of subdivision (b) of Section 1011.

23 (3) The Veterans’ Home of California, West Los Angeles, as
24 provided for in subdivision (a) of Section 1104.

25 (b) The total amount appropriated in accordance with
26 subdivision (a) may not exceed the sum of _____ dollars (\$_____).

27 SEC. 3. *This act shall become operative only if SB 1234 is*
28 *enacted and becomes effective on or before January 1, 2003.*

