

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 27, 2010

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 19, 2010

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 6, 2010

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2009—10 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 2143

Introduced by Assembly Member Gilmore
(Principal coauthor: Assembly Member Cook)
(Principal coauthors: Assembly Members Arambula and Cook)

February 18, 2010

An act to add Section 64.5 to the Military and Veterans Code, relating to military and veterans.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2143, as amended, Gilmore. ~~The~~ Department of Veterans Affairs: consolidation of services to veterans.

Existing law establishes the Department of Veterans Affairs within state government and sets forth its powers and duties, including, but not limited to, administration of veterans benefits programs. Existing law establishes the California Veterans Board within the department and sets forth its powers and duties, including, but not limited to, its power to determine operational policy for the department.

This bill would establish the California Veterans Services and Workforce Development Division within the Department of Veterans Affairs for the purpose of coordinating and administering veterans assistance programs in the state, and would require the division to perform various functions and duties relating to the coordination and administration of veterans assistance programs, as specified. *The bill would require the administrative and support staff responsible for the*

administration of the specified programs to be transferred from the Employment Development Department to the division, and would require the costs of the transfer to utilize existing resources of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

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

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

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

3 (a) California has the largest veteran population in the nation,
4 comprised of an estimated 2 million veterans. Each month,
5 thousands of military personnel are released from active service,
6 and face tremendous challenges transitioning back into civilian
7 life.

8 (b) The challenges military veterans face are compounded by
9 a complex system of veteran assistance programs that is difficult
10 to navigate.

11 (c) The United States Department of Veterans Affairs expended
12 approximately \$6 billion in California in the 2005 federal fiscal
13 year. Of that amount, \$2.66 billion was in disability payments
14 (compensation and benefits) to veterans. The states that have the
15 largest veteran populations in the nation are California, Florida,
16 and Texas. Texas veterans have collected 44 percent more disability
17 benefits than the amount collected by California veterans.

18 (d) Increasing disability benefit participation in California in
19 an amount that would approach the national average could generate
20 an additional \$330 million in annual payments to California
21 veterans.

22 (e) *It is the intent of the Legislature in enacting this act to*
23 *consolidate the veterans assistance programs and their dedicated*
24 *staff as identified in Section 64.5 of the Military and Veterans*
25 *Code, as added by this act, within the California Veterans Services*
26 *and Workforce Development Division of the Department of*
27 *Veterans Affairs.*

28 SEC. 2. Section 64.5 is added to the Military and Veterans
29 Code, to read:

30 64.5. (a) The California Veterans Services and Workforce
31 Development Division is hereby established within the department

1 for the purpose of coordinating and administering veterans
2 assistance programs in the state. The Secretary of Veterans Affairs
3 shall have authority over the division.

4 (b) The division shall do all of the following:

5 (1) Coordinate with other state agencies that provide benefits
6 and assistance to veterans to ensure that information about veterans
7 assistance programs and benefits is made available to all state
8 agencies that serve veterans in the state.

9 (2) Administer the Transitional Assistance Program (TAP) and
10 the Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP), *and oversee*
11 *the duties of Local Veteran Employment Representatives (LVER)*
12 *as prescribed under the Jobs for Veterans State Grants program,*
13 *in cooperation with the Employment Development Department.*
14 *The division shall work with staff from the Employment*
15 *Development Department to develop a plan whereby responsibility*
16 *for the administration of TAP and DVOP shall be transferred from*
17 *the Employment Development Department to the division.*

18 (3) Ensure that other state agencies and officials that are
19 involved in the implementation and administration of veterans
20 services programs are informed when any changes in existing
21 programs are required, or new programs are established that
22 provide assistance and benefits to veterans, and require that those
23 agencies and officials report to the division when those changes
24 occur or new programs are established.

25 (4) Collaborate with staff from other state agencies, including,
26 but not limited to, the Labor and Workforce Development Agency,
27 the Employment Training Panel, the California Workforce
28 Investment Board, the State Department of Mental Health, the
29 Department of General Services, the State Department of Alcohol
30 and Drug Programs, and representatives of the University of
31 California, the California State University, and the California
32 Community Colleges with regard to the provision of veterans
33 services and benefits.

34 (c) *I□ In complying with this section, all administrative and*
35 *support staff responsible for the administration of the DVOP, the*
36 *TAP, and Local Veteran Employment Representatives shall be*
37 *transferred from the Employment Development Department to the*
38 *division.*

1 (2) *Any costs associated with the implementation of these*
2 *transfers shall utilize existing resources of the Department of*
3 *Veterans Affairs.*

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