

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 2490

Introduced by Assembly Member Butler

February 24, 2012

An act to add Article 6 (commencing with Section 2695) to Chapter 4 of Title 1 of Part 3 to the Penal Code, relating to veterans.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2490, as introduced, Butler. Veterans service officers: correctional facilities.

Existing law establishes the Department of Veterans Affairs, which is responsible for administering various programs and services for the benefit of veterans. Existing law also authorizes each county board of supervisors to appoint a county veterans service officer to perform specified veterans-related services, including assisting veterans in pursuing claims for federal or state veterans' benefits.

This bill would require a parole agent to be appointed as a veterans service officer at any facility that is under the jurisdiction of the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. The veterans service officer would be responsible for assisting veterans who are inmates in pursuing claims for veterans' benefits, as specified. The bill would require the veterans service officer to coordinate with the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and county veterans service officers, as specified.

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. It is the intent of the Legislature to help inmates
2 who have served in the military to access federal and state veterans'
3 benefits earned from military service so that inmates who have
4 served in the military are better equipped to successfully reintegrate
5 into the community, thereby reducing costs to the state.

6 SEC. 2. Article 6 (commencing with Section 2695) is added
7 to Chapter 4 of Title 1 of Part 3 of the Penal Code, to read:

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9 Article 6. Veterans Service Officers

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11 2695. At any facility that is under the jurisdiction of the
12 Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, there shall be a
13 parole agent who shall be appointed as a veterans service officer.

14 2695.1. The veterans service officer shall be responsible for
15 assisting veterans who are inmates in pursuing claims for federal
16 veterans' benefits, or in establishing rights to any other privilege,
17 preference, care, or compensation provided under federal or state
18 law because of honorable service in the military. The veterans
19 service officer shall be authorized to appoint inmates who have
20 served in the military to assist with these responsibilities.

21 2695.3. The veterans service officer shall coordinate with the
22 United States Department of Veterans Affairs in order to best
23 access earned veterans' benefits.

24 2695.4. The veterans service officer shall coordinate with the
25 Department of Veterans Affairs and the county veterans service
26 officer in the county in which the facility is located for advice,
27 assistance, and training, and to evaluate the effectiveness of the
28 program.

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