

AMENDED IN SENATE JANUARY 12, 2012

AMENDED IN SENATE JANUARY 4, 2012

SENATE BILL

No. 663

Introduced by Senator Correa

February 18, 2011

An act to add Section 89.5 to the Military and Veterans Code, relating to veterans.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 663, as amended, Correa. Veterans: Homeless Veterans Advocate.

Under existing law, the Department of Veterans Affairs has specified powers and duties relating to various programs serving veterans, including ~~establishing housing projects~~ *duties related to the California Interagency Council on Veterans.*

This bill would require the ~~Secretary of Veterans Affairs to appoint a Homeless Veterans Advocate. This bill would require the Homeless Veterans Advocate to, among other things, act as an ombudsman to address the needs and issues of the homeless veteran community, including, but not limited to, issues of housing. This bill would also, on or before December 31, 2013, and on or before December 31 of each year thereafter, require the department to submit a report, prepared by the Homeless Veterans Advocate, to the Legislature on the state of, and recommendations for addressing, homeless veterans issues, as specified~~ *department to include specified information in the strategic plan created by California Interagency Council on Veterans related to homeless veterans, as provided. This bill would also require the department to transmit the strategic plan to the Chairmen of the Assembly and Senate Committees on 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. Section 89.5 is added to the Military and Veterans*

2 *Code, to read:*

3 *89.5. (a) The department shall include in the strategic plan*
4 *created by the Interagency Council on Veterans Affairs the*
5 *following:*

6 *(1) A review of the goals and objectives relating to homeless*
7 *veterans, to determine whether the methods the department uses*
8 *to plan, analyze, develop, monitor, and implement the strategic*
9 *plan will likely decrease homelessness among veterans.*

10 *(2) A determination of the number of homeless veterans in this*
11 *state and the number of those veterans who received benefits from*
12 *state or federal programs, including, but not limited to, the number*
13 *of homeless veterans in need of multifamily or transitional housing*
14 *and the number of those veterans who received benefits for those*
15 *needs.*

16 *(b) The department shall transmit the strategic plan to the*
17 *Chairman of the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs and the*
18 *Chairman of the Assembly Committee on Veterans Affairs.*

19 ~~SECTION 1. Section 89.5 is added to the Military and Veterans~~
20 ~~Code, to read:~~

21 ~~89.5.—(a) The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall appoint a~~
22 ~~Homeless Veterans Advocate, who shall report directly to the~~
23 ~~Secretary.~~

24 ~~(b) The Homeless Veterans Advocate shall have all of the~~
25 ~~following responsibilities:~~

26 ~~(1) Act as an ombudsman to address the needs and issues of the~~
27 ~~homeless veteran community, including, but not limited to, mental~~
28 ~~health, housing, and employment.~~

29 ~~(2) Work with federal, state, and local governments and local~~
30 ~~organizations to provide congruent and coordinated services to~~
31 ~~homeless veterans. This work may include locating federal, state,~~
32 ~~and private grants or other available funding to support health~~
33 ~~fairs, education, stand downs, transitional housing, clothing, and~~
34 ~~other basic needs of homeless veterans.~~

1 ~~(3) Review other programs administered by the department's~~
2 ~~Veterans Services Division that outreach to veterans. That review~~
3 ~~shall include a determination of whether the Veterans Services~~
4 ~~Division operates programs for homeless veterans and the extent~~
5 ~~to which the department assists with the administration of these~~
6 ~~programs in relation to addressing the homelessness among~~
7 ~~veterans.~~

8 ~~(4) Identify the federal disability benefits that qualifying~~
9 ~~homeless veterans may obtain, any barriers homeless veterans may~~
10 ~~face when applying for federal disability benefits, the services the~~
11 ~~department offers to help veterans overcome such barriers, and~~
12 ~~the methods used by the department to improve assistance to~~
13 ~~homeless veterans.~~

14 ~~(5) Ensure that homeless veterans get connected to proper~~
15 ~~services and assistance to meet their needs.~~

16 ~~(e) (1) Notwithstanding subdivision (b) of Section 10231.5 of~~
17 ~~the Government Code, on or before December 31, 2013, and on~~
18 ~~or before December 31 of each year thereafter, the Department of~~
19 ~~Veterans Affairs shall submit a report, prepared by the Homeless~~
20 ~~Veterans Advocate, to the Legislature on the state of, and~~
21 ~~recommendations for addressing, homeless veterans issues. The~~
22 ~~report shall contain all of the following:~~

23 ~~(A) A review of the goals and objectives in the department's~~
24 ~~strategic plan, as relating to homeless veterans, to determine~~
25 ~~whether the methods the department uses to plan, analyze, develop,~~
26 ~~monitor, and implement the strategic plan adequately address the~~
27 ~~issues and opportunities to improve homelessness among veterans.~~

28 ~~(B) A determination of the methods the department uses to~~
29 ~~identify and serve homeless veterans, including interactions with~~
30 ~~other entities that provide assistance to homeless veterans.~~

31 ~~(C) A determination of the number of homeless veterans in this~~
32 ~~state and the number of those veterans who received benefits from~~
33 ~~state or federal programs, including, but not limited to, the number~~
34 ~~of homeless veterans in need of multifamily or transitional housing~~
35 ~~and the number of those veterans who received benefits for those~~
36 ~~needs.~~

1 ~~(2) The report required to be submitted under paragraph (1)~~
2 ~~shall be submitted in compliance with Section 9795 of the~~
3 ~~Government Code.~~

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