

Assembly Joint Resolution

No. 38

Introduced by Assembly Member Salas

February 19, 2014

Assembly Joint Resolution No. 38—Relative to military and veterans.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AJR 38, as introduced, Salas. Fair employment and housing; military and veteran status.

This measure would request Congress to pass and the President to sign into law Senate Bill 1281 and House Resolution 2654, and encourages the members of the California Congressional Delegation to join as co-authors on those measures.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, Fewer than 7 percent of Americans have ever
2 served in the United States Armed Forces and less than 1 percent
3 wears the uniform today. Taken as a group, military members and
4 veterans are in the minority. While other minority groups enjoy
5 certain protections and advantages under the law, those who have
6 served and fought for their country currently enjoy no such
7 comprehensive legal consideration; and

8 WHEREAS, Frequently those who have served and sacrificed
9 are at a disadvantage in comparison to their peers and employment
10 is often the first obstacle that veterans must overcome during their
11 transition from the military to civilian life; and

12 WHEREAS, Employment is often the lynchpin that holds
13 families and lives together; and

1 WHEREAS, The value and importance of appropriate, living
2 wage employment cannot be underestimated in the overall
3 transition from the military to the civilian workforce and the best
4 approach for dealing with transition issues is a holistic approach,
5 which takes into account that employment is an integral facet of
6 a veteran’s overall continuum of well-being. The negative effects
7 of long-term unemployment are especially devastating to service
8 members who may also be suffering from additional stressors such
9 as: repeated deployments, marital discord, domestic violence,
10 multiple moves, substance abuse, depression, post-traumatic stress
11 disorder, homelessness, or suicidal thoughts; and

12 WHEREAS, It is not unusual for veterans transitioning from
13 military to civilian employment to enter the workforce years behind
14 their high school or college classmates, and while their
15 contemporaries have completed college, held internships, entered
16 the workforce, established expertise in their fields, and built a
17 professional network of contacts, those who have served, regardless
18 of experience or rank, are often forced to begin their civilian careers
19 at or near the bottom of the employment ladder; and

20 WHEREAS, Even though veterans bring a wealth of valuable
21 experiences to the workforce, their time in the military may often
22 not be understood or appreciated by civilian employers.
23 Misperceptions about veterans greatly contribute to high levels of
24 veteran unemployment and under-employment; and

25 WHEREAS, Veterans must also overcome the negative press
26 about the effects and repercussions of prolonged wars, such as
27 post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, and other
28 mental health issues affecting increasing numbers of returning
29 veterans, and there is a common perception of veterans as “ticking
30 time bombs,” “unstable and dangerous,” or “damaged goods”; and

31 WHEREAS, It is recognized that the practice of denying
32 employment opportunity and discriminating in the terms of
33 employment for these reasons foments domestic strife and unrest,
34 deprives the state of the fullest utilization of its capacities for
35 development and advancement, and substantially and adversely
36 affects the interests of employees, employers, and the public in
37 general; and

38 WHEREAS, The Legislature deems it important to the state to
39 protect and safeguard the right and opportunity of all persons to
40 seek, obtain, and hold employment without discrimination or

1 abridgment on account of race, religious creed, color, national
2 origin, ancestry, physical disability, mental disability, medical
3 condition, genetic information, marital status, sex, gender, gender
4 identity, gender expression, age, sexual orientation, or military
5 and veteran status; and

6 WHEREAS, The Legislature passed Assembly Bill 556 (Chapter
7 691 of the Statutes of 2013), which added military and veteran
8 status to the California Fair Employment and Housing Act; and

9 WHEREAS, The State of California urges the government of
10 the United States to enact similar protections at the federal level
11 in acknowledgment of the tremendous sacrifices our veterans have
12 made for this nation and to ensure that veterans enjoy the same
13 legally mandated, nondiscriminatory access to housing,
14 employment, and training opportunities as are afforded to other
15 deserving individuals; and

16 WHEREAS, Senate Bill 1281 by Senator Richard Blumenthal
17 and House Resolution 2654 by Representative Derek Kilmer seek
18 to accomplish these aims at the federal level; now, therefore, be
19 it

20 *Resolved by the Assembly and the Senate of the State of*
21 *California, jointly,* That the Legislature requests Congress of the
22 United States to pass and the President to sign into law Senate Bill
23 1281 and House Resolution 2654, and encourages the members
24 of the California Congressional Delegation to join as co-authors
25 on those measures; and be it further

26 *Resolved,* That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies
27 of this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United
28 States and to the Members of the United States Congress.