

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 1289

Introduced by Assembly Member Cooley

February 22, 2013

An act to add Section 429.9 to the Government Code, relating to state government.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1289, as introduced, Cooley. State government: California Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

Existing law establishes the state flag and the state's emblems, including, among other things, the poppy as the official state flower and the California redwood as the official state tree.

This bill would establish the California Vietnam Veterans Memorial as the official state Vietnam veterans war memorial.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: no. 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) California has the largest United States veteran population
- 4 in the nation, comprised of approximately two million armed
- 5 services veterans, which is 12.3 percent of the nationwide veteran
- 6 population of nearly 25 million veterans, who represent
- 7 approximately one-fifth of California's total population.

1 (b) More than 350,000 California veterans served in Vietnam,
2 resulting in 5,822 killed or missing in action, which comprised
3 more than 10 percent of the nation's total, and 40,000 wounded.

4 (c) More California residents died in Vietnam than residents of
5 any other state and California veterans received more Medals of
6 Honor, Bronze Stars, and Purple Hearts than veterans of any other
7 state.

8 (d) The history of the California Vietnam Veterans Memorial
9 began when Herman Woods, a double amputee who served in the
10 1st Air Cavalry Division, United States Army (1970), returned to
11 California from the dedication of the National Vietnam Veterans
12 Memorial in our nation's capitol, Washington, D.C., in 1982.

13 (e) Assembly Member Richard Floyd subsequently held a rally
14 on the steps of the State Capitol and over 800 people attended; he
15 was convinced that construction of the California Vietnam Veterans
16 Memorial was the will of California Vietnam veterans.

17 (f) Assembly Member Richard Floyd introduced Assembly Bill
18 650, which created the California Vietnam Veterans Memorial in
19 Capitol Park, and was signed into law by Governor Deukmejian
20 in September 1983.

21 (g) The newly formed Vietnam Veterans Memorial Commission
22 was comprised of nine veterans, eight of whom served in Vietnam,
23 including Linda J. McClenahan, Chairperson, Leo K. Thorsness,
24 Medal of Honor recipient and Vice Chairperson, and members
25 Gregory C. Green, Treasurer, Abel A. Cota, Secretary, B.T. Collins,
26 Don A. Drumheller, Jesse G. Ugalde, Senator Jim Ellis, Assembly
27 Member Richard E. Floyd, member and author of Assembly Bill
28 650, and Jerri L. Dale, Executive Officer, which led to the creation
29 of the California Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

30 (h) The California Vietnam Veterans Memorial is located in the
31 northeast section of the Capitol Park grounds of the State Capitol
32 and is a standing tribute to the 5,822 servicemen and servicewomen
33 killed and missing in action.

34 (i) The California Vietnam Veterans Memorial was dedicated
35 on December 10, 1988, in Capitol Park; there were thousands in
36 attendance at the dedication ceremonies where Brigadier General
37 George B. Price was the keynote speaker at the dedication; and
38 the dedication events were spread out over a two-day period,
39 commencing with "Buddy Search" registrations, unit reunions,

1 open houses, and concluding with the dedication ceremony in
2 Capitol Park.

3 (j) The theme of the memorial reflects the overwhelming
4 majority of those who were killed in Vietnam, including
5 19-year-old infantry soldiers, their youth, camaraderie, the fatigue
6 of the war, and the American women who served, with the winning
7 entry in the opening design competition awarded to Michael
8 Larson, a Marine Corps Vietnam veteran, and Thomas Chytrowski.

9 (k) B.T. Collins and Stan Atkinson, who had traveled to Vietnam
10 together after the war, undertook the mission of raising the
11 necessary funds to complete the memorial.

12 SEC. 2. Section 429.9 is added to the Government Code, to
13 read:

14 429.9. The California Vietnam Veterans Memorial is the
15 official state Vietnam veterans war memorial.

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