

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MARCH 25, 2014

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2013–14 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 1509

Introduced by Assembly Member Fox
(Coauthors: Assembly Members Brown and Quirk-Silva)

January 14, 2014

An act to add Section 90 to the Military and Veterans Code, relating to veterans.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1509, as amended, Fox. Veterans: transition assistance.

Existing law establishes the Department of Veterans Affairs, which is responsible for administering various programs and services for the benefit of veterans.

This bill would require, by ~~January~~ *July* 1, 2015, the Department of Veterans Affairs to develop a transition assistance program for veterans who have been discharged from the Armed Forces of the United States or the National Guard of any state ~~within the previous 18 months~~, 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. The Legislature finds and declares the following:*
- 2 *(a) California veterans should receive ample resources and*
- 3 *information to assist their transition into civilian life. Though*
- 4 *California is home to nearly 1.9 million veterans, California*
- 5 *veterans utilize fewer benefits than their peers at the national level.*

1 Further, 50 percent of post 9/11 veterans experience difficulty
 2 transitioning to civilian life and are experiencing higher rates of
 3 disabilities than previous generations of veterans. Young post 9/11
 4 veterans also experience higher unemployment rates than their
 5 civilian counterparts.

6 (b) The Federal “Transition Assistance Program Goals, Plans
 7 and Success” (TGPS) Program, formerly known as the Transition
 8 Assistance Program, was created in 1990 to inform and assist
 9 veterans in understanding their Department of Veterans Affairs
 10 (VA) benefits. However, TGPS workshops provide information
 11 specific to the state where a veteran is immediately ending his or
 12 her service and not to the location of permanent residence.
 13 Veterans who were planning to move to California after their
 14 service do not receive information about how to best coordinate
 15 their VA benefits with existing California benefits. A California
 16 specific transition assistance program would ensure that all
 17 veterans residing in California receive the resources and
 18 information they need to successfully transition into civilian life.

19 **SECTION 1.**

20 **SEC. 2.** Section 90 is added to the Military and Veterans Code,
 21 to read:

22 90. (a) By ~~January~~ July 1, 2015, the Department of Veterans
 23 Affairs shall develop a transition assistance program for veterans
 24 who have been discharged from the Armed Forces of the United
 25 States or the National Guard of any state ~~within the previous 18~~
 26 ~~months~~. The program shall be designed to assist veterans in
 27 successfully transitioning from military to civilian life in California
 28 and to complement the transition program offered by the
 29 Department of Defense. The program shall include, but shall not
 30 be limited to, *the following* California-specific transition assistance
 31 ~~information, California information:~~ higher education benefits
 32 and program information, vocational training assistance,
 33 ~~apprenticeship programs, small business resources and information,~~
 34 *health care programs and services, mental health resources and*
 35 *information, military sexual trauma (MST) resources and*
 36 *information, and housing information.*

37 (b) *It is the intent of the Legislature that the department utilize*
 38 *its existing personnel and other resources, including its existing*
 39 *internet-based CalVet Internet Web site, to disseminate this*
 40 *information.*

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