

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 2261

Introduced by Assembly Member Gorell

February 21, 2014

An act to add Section 81 to the Military and Veterans Code, relating to veterans.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2261, as introduced, Gorell. Veterans Services and Workforce Division: veterans' benefits.

Existing law establishes the Department of Veterans Affairs, which administers various benefits for veterans.

This bill would create a Veterans Services and Workforce Development Division within the Department of Veterans Affairs to develop a Transitional Assistance Program and to oversee the Local Veterans Employment Representatives and Disabled Veterans Outreach Program. This bill would require specified staff to be transferred from various departments and agencies to the Veterans Services and Workforce Division. This bill would require a head of a state agency or department to report to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs when a new program is established that may assist veterans.

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 has the largest veteran population in the nation,
- 3 comprised of an estimated 2 million veterans.

1 (b) Each month, thousands of military personnel are released
2 from active service and face tremendous challenges transitioning
3 back into civilian life.

4 (c) The challenges veterans face are compounded by a system,
5 intended to help them, that is generally recognized as being difficult
6 and complex to navigate.

7 (d) Increasing disability benefit participation to the national
8 average could lead to a distribution of an additional \$330,000,000
9 in annual payments to California veterans.

10 SEC. 2. Section 81 is added to the Military and Veterans Code,
11 to read:

12 81. (a) A Veterans Services and Workforce Development
13 Division shall be established in the department.

14 (b) The Veterans Services and Workforce Division shall develop
15 a Transitional Assistance Program and oversee the following
16 programs:

17 (1) The Local Veterans Employment Representatives.

18 (2) Disabled Veterans Outreach Program.

19 (c) Staff with specified knowledge and information from the
20 following departments and agencies shall be transferred to the
21 Veterans Service and Workforce Division to facilitate a one-stop
22 shop for veterans by utilizing other workforce investment
23 programs:

24 (1) Employment Training Panel.

25 (2) Labor and Workforce Development Agency.

26 (3) California Workforce Investment Board.

27 (4) State Department of Mental Health.

28 (5) Department of General Services.

29 (6) State Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs.

30 (7) California State University.

31 (8) University of California.

32 (9) California Community Colleges.

33 (10) Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

34 (d) The secretary shall have authority over the Veterans Services
35 and Workforce Division.

36 (e) A head of a state agency or department shall report to the
37 secretary when a new program is established that may assist
38 veterans.

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