

Assembly Joint Resolution No. 19

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 138

Assembly Joint Resolution No. 19—Relative to military service.

[Filed with Secretary of State August 25, 2015.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AJR 19, Alejo. Military service.

This measure would urge the Congress of the United States to enact legislation allowing immigrants to serve in the military if they are eligible under the President's Executive Order for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals or Executive Order for Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents.

WHEREAS, Since the end of the last United States military draft in 1973, Americans have not been obligated to enlist, and currently less than one percent of the United States population serves in the armed forces. During World War II, up to twelve percent of the population served in the armed forces; and

WHEREAS, Thousands of immigrants have served and continue serving in vital military roles, including intelligence, information operations such as foreign language translators, interpreters, and cultural experts, making them an essential resource to our national defense; and

WHEREAS, The United States Army has recently expanded its Military Accessions Vital to the National Interest (MAVNI) program to allow immigrants with certain skills that are in demand to join the Army in exchange for expedited United States citizenship; and

WHEREAS, Since 2009, over 14,500 United States military personnel on active duty serving in our armed forces are immigrants that are not United States citizens; and

WHEREAS, Since the September 11th attacks, more than 53,000 immigrants have enlisted in the United States military and have received wartime military naturalization; and

WHEREAS, One of the first casualties of the United States intervention in Iraq was an undocumented immigrant from Guatemala, Lance Cpl. Jose Gutierrez, who was granted American citizenship posthumously. Subsequently, more than 100 immigrant soldiers have been granted posthumous citizenship after dying in defense of the United States during combat in Iraq and Afghanistan; and

WHEREAS, As of 2008, the highest percentage of foreign-born United States military personnel was from Latin America and the Caribbean, with 38.7 percent (23,926) originating from Latin America and 35.9 percent (22,226) from Asia; and

WHEREAS, Over 5 million immigrants in the United States and over 1.5 million immigrants in California are eligible under the President's Executive Order for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program and Executive Order for Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents (DAPA) program and could, at the appropriate age, join the military in defense of their nation; and

WHEREAS, Currently, an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) that would allow some young immigrants with DACA status to serve in the military was passed out of the House Armed Services Committee with bipartisan support; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly and the Senate of the State of California, jointly, That the Legislature urges the Congress of the United States to enact legislation allowing immigrants to serve in the military if they are eligible under the President's Executive Order for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals or Executive Order for Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United States, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives, to the Majority Leader of the Senate, the Minority Leader of the Senate, and to each Senator and Representative from California in the Congress of the United States.