

**ASSEMBLY BILL**

**No. 2512**

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**Introduced by Assembly Member Grove**

February 19, 2016

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An act to add Section 73.2 to the Military and Veterans Code, relating to women veterans health care.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2512, as introduced, Grove. Task Force on California Women Veterans Health.

Existing law creates the Department of Veterans Affairs and the California Veterans Board that is required to advise the department and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on policies for operations of the department. Existing law authorizes the board to create advisory committees consisting of veterans to advise the board in specific fields. Existing law requires the department, by July 1, 2015, to develop a transition assistance program for veterans who have been discharged from the Armed Forces of the United States or the National Guard, designed to assist veterans in successfully transitioning to civilian life, that includes information about California-specific transition assistance, including health care programs and services, mental health resources, and military sexual trauma resources.

This bill would create the Task Force on California Women Veterans Health Care, within the department, comprised of an unspecified number of members. The bill would require the department to provide staff support to the task force. The bill would require the task force to study the health care needs of women veterans in the state, as specified. The bill would also require the task force to submit a report to the Governor and the appropriate committees of the Legislature that includes the task

force's findings and recommendations. The bill would require the task force, when conducting its study and preparing its report, to consult with the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, the State Department of Public Health, the Department of Managed Health Care, and representatives of county veterans service officers.

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 hereby makes the following  
2 findings and declarations:
- 3 (a) Recently, each branch of the Armed Forces of the United  
4 States has opened to women combat positions that were previously  
5 closed to women.
- 6 (b) According to the United States Department of Veterans  
7 Affairs, the projected veterans population nationwide is  
8 approximately 23,000,000, with women making up an estimated  
9 10 percent of that population.
- 10 (c) The United States Department of Veterans Affairs estimates  
11 the percentage of female veterans will increase from approximately  
12 9 percent in 2010 to approximately 18 percent in 2040.
- 13 (d) Females comprise approximately 80,000 of the wartime  
14 veterans.
- 15 (e) The number of women veterans will continue to increase  
16 due to ongoing combat operations in th Middle East and  
17 Afghanistan.
- 18 (f) Women veterans often face unique challenges when  
19 transitioning from active duty to civilian life.
- 20 (g) The challenging needs facing women veterans can often be  
21 overlooked when providing services to the very large veteran  
22 population.
- 23 (h) Ensuring the availability of specialized services for physical  
24 and mental health, including treatment of post-traumatic stress  
25 disorder, traumatic brain injury, military sexual trauma, and alcohol  
26 and substance abuse tailored to the specific needs of women  
27 veterans is essential if California is to ensure that our returning  
28 veterans receive proper care.
- 29 (i) Establishing a task force to study the health issues facing  
30 women veterans and making recommendations to the Governor

1 and the Legislature will provide much needed information and  
2 insight.

3 SEC. 2. Section 73.2 is added to the Military and Veterans  
4 Code, to read:

5 73.2. (a) (1) There is hereby created within the department  
6 the Task Force on California Women Veterans Health Care.

7 (2) The task force shall be comprised of \_\_\_\_\_ members.

8 (3) Task force members shall not be compensated for their  
9 service. Task force members shall be reimbursed for their  
10 reasonable and necessary expenses incurred in service of the task  
11 force.

12 (b) The department shall provide staff support to the task force.

13 (c) The task force shall study the health care needs of women  
14 veterans in the state, including, but not limited to, all of the  
15 following:

16 (1) The quality of, and access to, mental health services,  
17 including services and treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder  
18 and traumatic brain injury.

19 (2) Inpatient treatment availability.

20 (3) The adequacy and availability of appropriate health care for  
21 women veterans within the federal health care system and within  
22 the state.

23 (4) The adequacy and quality of, and access to, services  
24 providing for the identification and treatment of military sexual  
25 trauma, including sexual harassment or abuse.

26 (d) The task force shall submit a report to the Governor and the  
27 appropriate committees of the Legislature, including the findings  
28 of the task force's study and recommendations to improve  
29 provision of health care services to women veterans in the state.

30 (e) The task force, when conducting its study and preparing its  
31 report, shall consult with the United States Department of Veterans  
32 Affairs, the State Department of Public Health, the Department of  
33 Managed Health Care, and representatives of county veterans  
34 service officers.