

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 6, 2016

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2015–16 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 2512

Introduced by Assembly Member Grove

February 19, 2016

An act to add *and repeal* Section 73.2~~40~~ of the Military and Veterans Code, relating to women veterans health care.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2512, as amended, 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~~ *would, until July 1, 2022*, create the Task Force on California Women Veterans Health Care, within the department, comprised of ~~an unspecified number of members. 9 voting members appointed by the Secretary of Veteran Affairs.~~ The bill would require the secretary to designate an employee of the department to serve as a nonvoting representative of the department to the task force and 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 an annual report, commencing on or before January 1, 2020, and until January 1, 2022, inclusive, to the Governor and the appropriate policy committees of the Legislature that have jurisdiction over the department, that includes the task force’s findings and recommendations. The bill would require the task force, when conducting its study and preparing its annual 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~~ the 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.

1 (h) Ensuring the availability of specialized services for physical
2 and mental health, including treatment of post-traumatic stress
3 disorder, traumatic brain injury, military sexual trauma, and alcohol
4 and substance abuse tailored to the specific needs of women
5 veterans is essential if California is to ensure that our returning
6 veterans receive proper care.

7 (i) Establishing a task force to study the health issues facing
8 women veterans and making recommendations to the Governor
9 and the Legislature will provide much needed information and
10 insight.

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

13 73.2. (a) (1) There is hereby created within the department
14 the Task Force on California Women Veterans Health Care.

15 (2) The task force shall be comprised of ~~_____ members.~~ *nine*
16 *voting members appointed by the secretary.*

17 (3) Task force members shall not ~~be compensated for their~~
18 ~~service. Task force members shall be reimbursed for their~~
19 ~~reasonable and necessary expenses incurred in service of the task~~
20 ~~force.~~ *receive compensation for their service, including travel or*
21 *other expenses incurred to participate in task force meetings or*
22 *per diem.*

23 (b) *The secretary shall designate an employee of the department*
24 *to serve as a nonvoting representative of the department to the*
25 *task force, and the department shall provide staff support to the*
26 *task force.*

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

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

33 (2) Inpatient treatment availability.

34 (3) The adequacy and availability of appropriate health care for
35 women veterans within the federal health care system and within
36 the state.

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

- 1 (d) The task force shall submit ~~a report~~ *an annual report,*
2 *commencing on or before January 1, 2020, and until January 1,*
3 *2022, inclusive,* to the Governor and the ~~appropriate policy~~
4 *committees of the Legislature, Legislature that have jurisdiction*
5 *over the department,* including the findings of the task force’s
6 study and recommendations to improve provision of health care
7 services to women veterans in the state.
- 8 (e) The task force, when conducting its study and preparing its
9 *annual report,* shall consult with the United States Department of
10 Veterans Affairs, the State Department of Public Health, the
11 Department of Managed Health Care, and representatives of county
12 veterans service officers.
- 13 (f) *This section shall become inoperative on July 1, 2022, and,*
14 *as of January 1, 2023, is repealed, unless a later enacted statute,*
15 *that becomes operative on or before January 1, January 1, 2023,*
16 *deletes or extends the dates on which it becomes inoperative and*
17 *is repealed.*