

Senate Bill No. 1227

CHAPTER 485

An act to add Section 14302.5 to the Public Resources Code, relating to conservation.

[Approved by Governor September 22, 2016. Filed with Secretary of State September 22, 2016.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 1227, Lara. California Conservation Corps.

Existing law establishes the California Conservation Corps in the Natural Resources Agency and requires the corps to implement and administer the conservation corps program. Existing law requires the corps, in conjunction with the Employment Development Department, to place an emphasis on developing and executing plans to assist corpsmembers in obtaining employment following their participation in the corps program.

This bill would additionally require the corps to collaborate with the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Employment Development Department to assist any corpsmember who is a veteran of the United States Armed Forces in obtaining employment after participating in the corps program. The bill would specify that the collaboration efforts by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Employment Development Department shall include, but not be limited to, providing access to veterans supportive services and workforce services, respectively.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(a) California has the largest veteran population in the country with 1.9 million former servicemen and servicewomen.

(b) Veterans between the ages of 18 and 34 years have a higher unemployment rate than their civilian peers.

(c) The California Conservation Corps provides young veterans with a unique opportunity to transition into the civilian workforce and various workforce training opportunities, including maintaining hiking trails, planting trees, and assisting in emergency response situations by, among other things, fighting fires, floods, earthquakes, and pest infestations.

(d) By statute, the Employment Development Department, working with the California Conservation Corps, provides transitional services for all corpsmembers.

(e) The Department of Veterans Affairs provides assistance to access various supportive services and benefits for veterans, including healthcare, tuition assistance, and home loans.

(f) Most young veterans do not use the state benefits afforded to them through their military service.

(g) Bringing the Department of Veterans Affairs into the transitional process for young veterans exiting the California Conservation Corps will connect young veterans with the benefits they have earned, support the current efforts of the California Conservation Corps and the Employment Development Department, and ensure that those young veterans smoothly transition from corpsmembership into the civilian workforce.

SEC. 2. Section 14302.5 is added to the Public Resources Code, to read:

14302.5. (a) The corps shall collaborate with the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Employment Development Department to assist any corpsmember who is a veteran of the United States Armed Forces in obtaining employment after participating in the corps program.

(b) Collaboration efforts by the Department of Veterans Affairs shall include, but not be limited to, providing access to veterans supportive services. Collaboration efforts by the Employment Development Department shall include, but not be limited to, providing access to workforce services.