

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 2785

**Introduced by Committee on Veterans Affairs (Salas (Chair),
Gilmore, Lieu, V. Manuel Perez, and Yamada)**

March 8, 2010

An act to add Section 87 to the Military and Veterans Code, relating to veterans.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2785, as introduced, Committee on Veterans Affairs. Department of Veterans Affairs: administration: agreements with other agencies.

Under existing law the Department of Veterans Affairs has specified powers and duties relating to military veterans, and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs is in charge of the department.

This bill would require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, on or before June 30, 2011, and every year thereafter, to identify other state agencies and departments that offer or provide services to veterans, for the purpose of entering into formal agreements that specify the respective roles and activities of the entities.

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) A 2009 audit performed by the State Auditor of the
- 3 Department of Veterans Affairs confirmed that the department
- 4 provides few direct services to veterans, outside of its veteran
- 5 homes and Cal Vet Home Loan Program, and that the department

1 has extremely limited interaction and few formal agreements with
2 other state agencies and other departments that could provide
3 additional services to veterans if done in a coordinated and efficient
4 manner.

5 (b) This dysfunction unfortunately comes at a critical time, with
6 California on the verge of experiencing the return of thousands of
7 soldiers from Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation
8 Enduring Freedom (OEF) who will need to be reintegrated back
9 into the workforce and the community. Many of those veterans
10 will have served multiple tours of duty in combat zones and thus
11 will likely suffer from both physical and mental health issues, such
12 as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injury
13 (TBI).

14 (c) The 2009 audit additionally noted that the strategic plan of
15 the department covering fiscal years 2007 to 2012, inclusive, is
16 incomplete and has not formally assessed the needs of veterans or
17 included key stakeholders in its strategic planning process, nor has
18 it effectively measured the department's progress towards meeting
19 the goals and objectives identified in the plan.

20 SEC. 2. Section 87 is added to the Military and Veterans Code,
21 to read:

22 87. On or before June 30, 2011, and every year thereafter, the
23 Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall identify other state agencies
24 and departments that offer or provide services to veterans, for the
25 purpose of entering into formal agreements that specify the
26 respective roles and activities of the entities.