

# MEMORANDUM

## PLACER COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE OFFICE

**TO:** Honorable Board of Supervisors

**FROM:** Jonn Melrose 

**DATE:** April 23, 2013

**SUBJECT:** Authorize the Chair of the Board of Supervisors to sign a letter of support for Senate Bill 296.

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### ACTION REQUESTED

Authorize the Chair of the Board of Supervisors to sign a letter of support for Senate Bill 296, to increase statewide funding for County Veterans Service Offices.

### BACKGROUND

County Veterans Service Officers are the local point of contact through which military veterans and their families negotiate the complex benefits claim process of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) allocates \$2.54 million per year to be distributed among County Veterans Services Offices based on claims completed by each County. This allocation has remained unchanged since 2003. Senate Bill 296 (Correa) would increase the \$2.54 million annual State allocation to \$9.0 million.

Placer County is home to 30,000 veterans. The Placer County Veterans Service Office receives only 15% of its funding, or \$85,000 annually, from the CalVet allocation. The remainder is supported by the County General Fund. An increase of State funding would allow more education, outreach, and direct Federal financial benefits for Placer County veterans and their families.

### FISCAL IMPACT

The County Veterans Service Office currently receives \$85,000 annually from the statewide CalVet allocation of \$2.54 million. SB 296 would make available a statewide allocation of \$9.0 million that would be available to all County Veterans Service Offices.

# County of Placer Board of Supervisors

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April 23, 2013

The Honorable Ben Hueso  
Chair, Senate Veterans Affairs Committee  
State Capitol, Room 2054  
Sacramento, California 95814

## Re: SB 296 (Correa) – Funding for County Veterans Service Officers - SUPPORT

Dear Senator Hueso:

On behalf of Placer County and the 30,000 veterans we represent, I am writing in support of Senate Bill 296 (Correa), to increase funding for County Veteran Service Officers (CVSOs). If enacted, this bill would increase the amount of State assistance to CVSOs by \$6.46 million for a total of \$9 million dollars statewide.

California is home to approximately two million veterans and their families. Some \$3.65 billion in federal benefits comes into the State every year according to the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CDVA or CalVet). The majority of these benefits were realized with help from our counties and their respective CVSOs

The State currently allocates \$2.54 million per year to be distributed among the 56 California counties that provide veteran assistance, unchanged since 2003. While Placer County provides 75% of the budget for our CVSO, the CalVet funding accounts for less than 20%.

Our CVSO is instrumental in helping our returning veterans in understanding the complex VA process. During the first three months of this calendar year alone, our small County Veteran Service Office has garnered over \$650,000 in retroactive payments and over \$70,000 per month in direct federal payments to our veterans and their dependents. **This equates to approximately a \$6.00 return for every \$1.00 the State or the County allocates.** It is important to note that the monthly benefit will continue until the claimant passes away. Therefore an action completed today can benefit the veteran and family for decades to come.

Placer County strongly supports Senate Bill 296. Increasing CVSO funding at the State level would allow more education, outreach, and direct Federal financial benefits for our local veterans and their families.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact Jonn Melrose, County Veteran Service Officer at (916) 780-3290.

Sincerely,

Jim Holmes  
Chairman, Board of Supervisors, Placer County

Cc: Senator Ted Gaines  
Senator Jim Nielsen  
Assembly Member Brian Dahle  
Assembly Member Dan Logue  
Assembly Member Frank Bigelow  
Assembly Member Beth B. Gaines  
Assembly Member Cheryl Brown  
Karen Lange, Peterson Consulting Inc.  
California State Association of Counties (CSAC)

