

County of Placer Board of Supervisors

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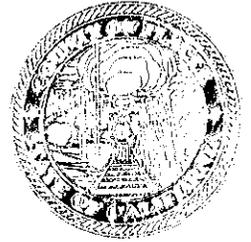
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District 4

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District 5



April 23, 2013

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

Re: SB 296 – 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, 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.

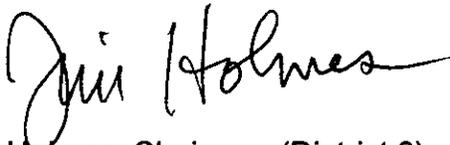
Placer County strongly supports Senate Bill 296. Increasing CVSO funding at the State level would allow more education, outreach and direct Federal financial benefits for our local veterans and their families.

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

Sincerely,

COUNTY OF PLACER

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Holmes". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "J" and "H".

Jim Holmes, Chairman (District 3)
Placer County Board of Supervisors

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)