

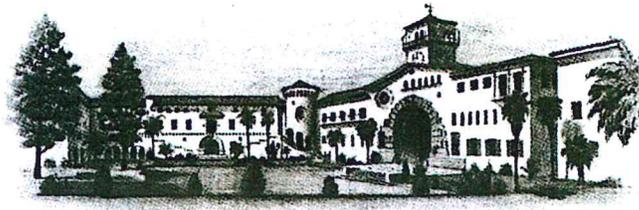
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COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

February 27, 2014

The Honorable Sharon Quirk-Silva
State Capitol
P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249-0065

RE: AB 2703 - County Veterans Service Officers

Dear Assemblymember Quirk-Silva:

The 2014 County of Santa Barbara Legislative Platform, adopted unanimously by the Board of Supervisors, supports efforts to generate new intergovernmental revenue, enhance existing revenue and increase reimbursement levels for critical public services. Assembly Bill (AB) 2703 does just that by appropriating \$6,000,000 to the Department of Veterans Affairs, then disbursing the funds to counties for County Veteran Service Officers (CVSO).

An entirely new generation of Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans may be eligible for federal benefits because of their service and their physical and/or mental condition. At the same time, a large number of underserved veterans and their dependents are unaware of the federal benefits available to them as a result of their military service.

California's CVSOs are the initial point of contact for veterans and their families seeking access to benefits from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs. Studies from other states have shown that increases in CVSOs have resulted in larger amounts of federal moneys to the veterans. These new federal moneys and benefits, paid directly from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs to the qualifying veteran or their dependent, are used in the local economy. Additional savings are incurred as a result of CVSOs qualifying and shifting veterans away from Medi-Cal and onto the appropriate federal veterans program.

If you have any questions about our position, please contact Dennis Bozanich with our County Executive Office at (805) 658-3107 or dbozanich@co.santa-barbara.ca.us. Thank you for your efforts to support our veterans.

Sincerely,

Steve Lavagnino, Chair

CC: The Honorable Hanna-Beth Jackson, California State Senate
The Honorable Das Williams – 37th Assembly District

The Honorable Katcho Achadjian – 35th Assembly District
Monica Miller, Legislative Advocate
Cliff Berg, Legislative Advocate
Members of the Board of Supervisors