

Date of Hearing: April 10, 2012

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS
Paul J. Cook, Chair
AB 2198 (Nielsen) – As Introduced: February 23, 2012

SUBJECT: Department of Veterans Affairs: reporting requirements

SUMMARY: The Department of Veterans Affairs (Department) is required to submit an annual report on the activity of County Veteran Service Officers (CVSO). Specifically, this bill: Expands the reporting requirement to include:

- 1) The number of veterans and their dependents who came in contact with a CVSO.
- 2) The number of veterans and their dependents for whom federal or state claims were filed, including new or increased claims.
- 3) The number of veterans and their dependents who received services from the federal government that relieved any financial obligation of the state or a county.
- 4) The number of homeless veterans and their dependents who were assisted in obtaining federal benefits.

This bill also extends the January 1 due date to March 1.

EXISTING LAW: Requires the Department to annually prepare a report of the activities of CVSO, as specified, and may require each CVSO to submit information required to prepare the report. Existing law requires the following minimum information be included in the report:

- 1) The number of monthly federal benefit payments obtained on behalf of veterans;
- 2) The total value of those monthly benefit payments;
- 3) The average value of those monthly benefit payments;
- 4) The number of one-time benefit payments obtained, including both single-payment benefits and retroactive payments;
- 5) The total value of one-time benefit payments obtained; and
- 6) The average value of these one-time benefit payments obtained.

The report must break down each of the foregoing totals by county and include a statewide total. The Department is required to transmit a copy of the report to the Department of Finance, the State Department of Health Care Services, the California Veterans Board, and to each Member of the Legislature on or before January 1 of each year.

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown

COMMENTS: The annual report on the activities of CVSOs is currently due on January 1. At that time the Legislature is not in session, and according to the author, the impact of the report is diminished as a result of the absence of the Legislature. It is the author's belief that by changing the due date of the report from January 1 to March 1, there will be a chance for the actions of the CVSOs to be brought to the attention of the members of the Legislature.

The information presently requested in the report is focused on funding and the benefit payments being obtained by the CVSOs. According to the author, the report does not give the full picture on the actions of CVSOs and the amount of work they actually do. For example, the total number of claims filed by CVSOs is not reported. A CVSO may make multiple claims for one veteran, but rather than demonstrating the amount of work the report only displays the amount of money that veteran will be receiving.

According to the author the CVSOs now use a system which makes it easier for them to compile useful information for the report which is being requested in this bill.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

The American Legion-Department of California
AMVETS- Department of California
California Association of County Veterans Service Officers
California State Commanders Veterans Council

Opposition

None on File.

Analysis Prepared by: Jenny Callison / V. A. / (916) 319-3550