



County of Monterey

Board of Supervisors

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May 11, 2026

The Honorable Buffy Wicks
Chair, Assembly Appropriations Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 8220
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 1638 (Ta) County veterans service officers: additional resources - SUPPORT

Dear Chair Wicks,

On behalf of the County of Monterey, I write in support of AB 1638 (Ta), which would, upon appropriation of the legislature, provide stipends to counties that host an active United States military base for the purposes of maintaining a county veterans service officer, at least part time, at each active United States military base in the county, subject to base approval.

County Veteran Service Officers (CVSO) assist veterans in navigating the benefit process, helping veterans receive services such as medical care, home loans, and ongoing education. The California Association of CVSOs reports that claims filed through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) with the assistance of a CVSO have a higher rate of approval, demonstrating the value of CVSOs in guiding veterans through a complicated bureaucracy and connecting them to the benefits they deserve.

The Center for New American Security found that many veterans are unaware of the role CVSOs play and the resources they provide. To promote access to CVSOs, Solano County chose to permanently station a veterans service officer (VSO) at Travis Air Force Base. Since then, the Solano VSO has served an average of 10 discharging service members per day with nearly \$95 million in VA benefits being awarded.

California counties often lack the resources required to provide a permanent on-base CVSO. At Lemoore Naval Air Station and Edwards Air Force Base, there is no permanent CVSO stationed on base, resulting in discharging service members receiving intermittent support in navigating benefit claims and the challenges post-discharge.

AB 1638 will resolve this disparity and ensure that the tens of thousands of service members discharged from active duty each year in California receive access to an on-base CVSO and the benefits they are entitled to. CVSO access expansion will help connect veterans to their well-deserved benefits, which will assist veterans and their families in the state. For these reasons, we are pleased to support AB 1638. Should you have any questions, please contact Senior Policy Advisor, Ashley Walker at 916-930-7780.

Sincerely,

Wendy Root Askew, Chair
Board of Supervisors