



County of Monterey

Item No.

Board Report

Board of Supervisors
Chambers
168 W. Alisal St., 1st Floor
Salinas, CA 93901

Legistar File Number: 25-793

November 04, 2025

Introduced: 10/24/2025

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- a. Consider adoption of an ordinance repealing Chapter 3.14 of the Monterey County Code regarding hiring preference for veterans;
- b. Consider approving the Hiring Preference for Veterans and Eligible Military Spouses Policy (P-190); and,
- c. Consider approving the amended Military Leave Policy (P-220).

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors:

- a. Consider adoption of an ordinance repealing Chapter 3.14 of the Monterey County Code regarding hiring preference for veterans;
- b. Consider approving the Hiring Preference for Veterans and Eligible Military Spouses Policy (P-190); and,
- c. Consider approving the amended Military Leave Policy (P-220).

SUMMARY:

The Human Resources Department collaborated with the Military and Veterans Affairs Office to develop enhancements to the current Hiring Preference for Veterans and Military Leave Policy programs. These enhancements strengthen the County of Monterey's ("County") commitment of those who serve, supports their families, and strengthens our community's proud tradition of respecting and valuing military service. These recommendations align with the Human Resources Department's broader objective of positioning the County as an employer of choice.

DISCUSSION:

Hiring Preference for Veterans

On October 21, 2025, the Board of Supervisors introduced and waived the first reading of the draft ordinance to repeal Chapter 3.14 of the Monterey County Code ("MCC") regarding hiring preference for veterans. In addition, the Board directed the Human Resources Department to return with a standalone policy to strengthen the County's commitment to the military community.

On October 9, 1990, the Board of Supervisors adopted Ordinance No. 3495, codified in Chapter 3.14 of the MCC, establishing a hiring preference for veterans in County employment. Subsequently, on September 10, 1991, Ordinance No. 3565 was adopted to amend Chapter 3.14 to implement modifications ensuring the hiring preference functioned as originally intended during the recruitment and selection process. Although this framework created a formal mechanism to support veterans,

maintaining it as an ordinance has limited the County's ability to make timely adjustments in response to evolving workforce needs, legal requirements, and best practices.

In collaboration with the Military and Veterans Affairs Office ("MVAO"), the Human Resources Department ("HRD") recommends repealing Chapter 3.14 and replacing it with a standalone policy governing the hiring preference for veterans and eligible military spouses. This Policy would be housed in the Board Policy Manual, and administrative procedures and guidelines will be established by HRD in coordination with MVAO. Establishing this policy will provide greater administrative flexibility, enabling updates and refinements without the need for formal legislative action. This approach ensures the County can continue to effectively support veterans and eligible military spouses while adapting to emerging employment trends and regulatory considerations.

Importantly, the proposed change does not eliminate or diminish the veteran hiring preference. Instead, it strengthens the County's commitment by facilitating the efficient and effective implementation of enhancements.

Recommended enhancements of the administrative procedures and guidelines of the Hiring Preference for Veterans and Eligible Military Spouses policy include:

- Reduce disability rating from 20% to zero to qualify for veterans' preference points.
- Expand allocation of veterans' preference points to:
 - Spouse of totally disabled veteran;
 - Spouse of veteran who has died as a direct result of qualifying service; and
 - Spouse of active-duty service member.
- Remove restriction of:
 - Only applying for 5-years after separation from service to no time-limit since honorable discharge or separation from service; and
 - Service retirement veterans who receive service retirement compensation not being eligible.
- Broaden the positions eligible for Veteran's preference points to include all County positions, except for Executive Management Unit Y At-will positions.

The proposed ordinance is attached to this report as Attachment A. The recommended Hiring Preference for Veterans and Eligible Military Spouses Policy (P-190) is included as Attachment B.

Military Leave Policy

On October 23, 2001, the County proudly introduced its first Military Leave Policy, then titled *Noble Eagle*, as a demonstration of our commitment to employees serving our nation in the armed forces. Originally renewed annually through the budget process, the policy was further strengthened in 2009 when it was converted into a formal Board Policy, ensuring its permanence and stability without the need for yearly renewal. In 2018, the policy was once again updated to provide clearer definitions and greater transparency regarding the amount of prior military service required to qualify for benefits.

At its core, the County's Military Leave Policy is designed to ensure fair, consistent, and supportive treatment of all employees serving as military reservists and National Guard members, particularly

with respect to pay, benefits, and job protections. This policy reflects the County's deep respect for those who balance civilian service with the extraordinary responsibilities of military duty.

The current policy distinguishes between "Active Military Service" and "Inactive Military Service."

- *Active Military Service* refers to full-time service in any branch of the United States Armed Forces-including annual training periods of two weeks or more for reservists and National Guard members. This duty may be compensated under existing provisions.
- *Inactive Military Service*-such as weekend drills, annual muster training, voluntary unit maintenance activities, or other required inactive training-is currently designated as unpaid by the County. However, employees may use accrued leave balances to cover this time.

While this framework has historically aligned with California Government Code section 395.01(b) and ensured operational consistency, evolving best practices in public employment highlight an opportunity to do more. Recognizing the essential role of reservists and Guard members, and the value they bring to both our community and our nation, the County is moving toward a more equitable and supportive approach.

Accordingly, the HRD, in close partnership with the MVAO, recommends expanding the policy to authorize County pay for employees performing Inactive Military Service as well. This provision would be subject to the approval of both the Appointing Authority and the Military and Veterans Affairs Officer to ensure proper oversight and fairness.

This amendment represents more than a policy change - it is a reaffirmation of the County's enduring commitment to our military employees. By ensuring fair and consistent compensation practices across all forms of service, the County honors the dedication of those who serve, supports their families, and strengthens our community's proud tradition of respecting and valuing military service. The amended Military Leave Policy (P-220) is included as Attachments C and D.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

The HRD collaborated with the MVAO to develop and present these recommendations. The Military & Veterans Affairs Advisory Commission, BOS Human Resources Committee and County Administrative Office strongly support these recommendations. The Office of County Counsel has reviewed the ordinance as to form. In addition, the labor groups have been provided notice of the recommendations.

FINANCING:

There are no costs associated with approving the recommended Hiring Preference for Veterans and Eligible Military Spouses Policy. Based on the number of current County employees in inactive military status the costs associated for base wage compensation for inactive military service could range between \$5-10 thousand annually and will be borne by the respective departments.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS:

The proposed recommended actions demonstrate the County's commitment in recruiting, retaining, and attracting a diverse, talented workforce that supports the mission of the County of Monterey.

- ___ Well-Being and Quality of Life
- ___ Sustainable Infrastructure for the Present and Future
- ___ Safe and Resilient Communities
- ___ Diverse and Thriving Economy
- ✓ Dynamic Organization and Employer of Choice

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Attachments:

Attachment A - Presentation

Attachment B - Draft ordinance

Attachment C - Draft Hiring Preference for Veterans and Eligible Military Spouses Policy
(P-190)

Attachment D - Draft Military Leave Policy (P-220) (Redline)

Attachment E - Draft Military Leave Policy (P-220) (Clean)