



COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: 12/19/2023

File #: 23-1604

To: Board of Supervisors

From: DHHS: Administration

Agenda Section: Consent

Vote Requirement: Majority

SUBJECT:

Letter of Support for Commitment to Veteran Support and Outreach *Act* (H.R.984/S.106)

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Authorize the Chair to sign the letter of support.
2. Direct the County Administrative Office to send the letter of support to the county's federal representatives.

SOURCE OF FUNDING:

N/A

DISCUSSION:

California is home to over 1.8 million former service members, the largest veteran population of any state in the United States. Humboldt County is home to over 6,700 veterans - or 6.1% of our population - with a majority of those having served during the Vietnam era.

Veterans, particularly those who are recently transitioning into civilian life, older adults, those experiencing homelessness or housing insecurities, and veterans with disabilities, are often unaware of the benefits that they may be eligible for through the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). County Veterans Service Officers (CVSOs) are county employees who assist veterans in accessing a range of benefits, including service-connected benefits, enrollment in VA health care, VA home loans, education benefits and available job placement assistance.

CVSOs' primary focus is to assist the veteran to navigate the federal benefits system, however these offices are funded almost entirely by counties. There is currently no federal funding directly available for CVSOs.

The Commitment to Veteran Support and Outreach (CVSO) Act (H.R. 984/S. 106) has been re-introduced in the 118th Congress with bipartisan support. The legislation would offer federal funding

for CVSOs for the first time, authorizing annual award grants over five years to expand and support CVSOs. The VA would award competitive grants to CVSOs, through the states, to create, expand or support CVSOs, prioritizing areas with high rates of veteran suicide, Veteran Crisis Line referrals or CVSO shortages.

The letter asks the county's federal elected representatives support this legislation.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Narrative Explanation of Financial Impact:

There is no financial impact associated with sending a letter.

STAFFING IMPACT:

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impact:

There is no staffing impact associated with sending a letter.

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK:

This action supports the following areas of your Board's Strategic Framework.

Core Roles: Create opportunities for improved safety and health

New Initiatives: Seek outside funding sources to benefit Humboldt County needs

Strategic Plan: N/A

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

N/A

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Board may choose to not sign a letter of support for the Commitment to Veteran Support and Outreach Act (H.R.984/S.106). This alternative is not recommended because advocating for federal funding supports the county's financial ability to sustain the County Veterans Services Office to provide veterans services.

ATTACHMENTS:

Sample Letter of Support to Senators Padilla and Butler, and Representative Huffman

PREVIOUS ACTION/REFERRAL:

Board Order No.: N/A

Meeting of: N/A

File No.: N/A