



COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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December 16, 2025

The Honorable Bob Archuleta
California State Senate
1021 O Street, Suite 7420
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support for SB 694 (Archuleta) – Veterans Benefits Protection Act of 2025

Dear Senator Archuleta,

Humboldt County strongly supports Senate Bill 694, which strengthens consumer protections for California's veterans by ensuring that only accredited individuals may charge for services related to filing claims for U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits. Humboldt County, like all of our fellow counties around the state, provides services to support veterans in accessing resources, documenting their benefits, and finding the information they need to transition to and thrive in civilian life. These services are free to veterans.

SB 694 builds on the framework of SB 1124 (Menjivar, 2024) and addresses the alarming rise in unaccredited and often predatory actors—commonly known as “claim sharks”—that charge excessive or illegal fees for assisting veterans with benefit claims. These bad actors, who lack VA accreditation and oversight, pose serious risks to vulnerable veterans by promising guaranteed outcomes, pressuring veterans into dubious contracts, urging veterans to alter information about their medical conditions, and compromising access to sensitive personal data.

SB 694 will:

1. Prohibit unaccredited individuals from charging for the preparation, presentation, or prosecution of VA benefit claims;
2. Enhance penalties for unauthorized access to veterans' data on secure VA systems; and
3. Codify reasonable fee standards by clarifying under the Consumer Legal Remedies Act that fees exceeding those allowed for VA-accredited representatives are unlawful.

California's veterans deserve transparent, qualified, accountable representation when navigating access to benefits. This bill ensures that only individuals who meet federal standards and adhere to strict ethical requirements can charge for these services, thereby protecting veterans from exploitation and reinforcing existing legal frameworks. We commend your leadership on this important issue and urge the Legislature to support SB 694 without delay.

Sincerely,

Mike Wilson, Chair
Humboldt County Board of Supervisors