

**California VFW Legislative Report–7-6-2010**  
*William Manes, State Legislative/PAC Chairman*

**SACRAMENTO UPDATE**

Once again the State Legislature has missed the Constitutional deadline to pass a State budget. Most Sacramento lawmakers are predicting it will be months before they can find an answer to the \$19.1 billion budget deficit. By all indications, this summer the state will see the same back and forth over the huge spending cuts proposed by the Governor and the tax increases and elimination of corporate tax breaks proposed by Members of the Legislature.

State Controller John Chiang is issuing warnings that the State will run out of cash this summer without a new budget. Added into the mix, Governor Schwarzenegger plans to cut the pay of many state workers to the federal minimum wage if a budget agreement is not reached soon.

The Budget Conference Committee, made up of Members from the State Senate and the Assembly, had been going over the two draft budgets which had been drawn up by the two houses on a line-by-line basis but had not resolved any of the major issues. With all of that as a background, the Members of the State Legislature decided to close shop and go home for the month of July.

Normally, the Legislature would have had a Summer Recess from July 17 to August 16, if the Budget had been adopted and sent to the Governor. July 1-10 would have been an important period of time for the policy committees to finish up their work on all the bills which had been introduced this year.

Presumably, that will now be extended into August.

**ACTION ON BILLS**

The following bills have been passed by the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs and moved on to the Appropriations Committee, or to a Floor vote:

AB 1088 Taxpayer contributions: California Veterans Fund. (Nathan Fletcher, San Diego. Coauthors: Marty Block, San Diego; Connie Conway, Visalia; Chuck DeVore, Irvine; Danny Gilmore, Hanford; V. Manuel Perez, Cathedral City; Brian Nestande, Palm Desert)

Would authorize a new income check off for the California Veterans Fund which would replace the previous fund and would have the same purpose of providing support to the MWR Funds for the state veterans homes.

Also passed by the Senate Committee on Revenue and Taxation and sent to Appropriations.

Supported by VFW Department of California.

AB 1644 Veterans remains. (Jim Nielsen, Biggs. Principal Coauthor: Juan Arambula, Fresno. Coauthors, Assembly: Sam Blakeslee, San Luis Obispo; Marty Block, San Diego; Robert Blumenfield, Van Nuys; Steven Bradford, Inglewood; Connie Conway, Visalia; Chuck DeVore, Irvine; Nathan Fletcher, San Diego; Danny Gilmore, Hanford; Diane Harkey, Laguna Niguel; Curt Hagman, Diamond Bar; Fiona Ma, San Francisco; Roger Niello, Sacramento; and Chris Norby, Brea. Coauthors, Senate: Sam Aanestad, Grass Valley; Dave Cox, Fair Oaks; Jeff Denham, Merced; Abel Maldonado, Santa Maria; and George Runner, Antelope Valley.)

Would allow specified entities in possession of the cremated remains of a veteran to release the remains to a veterans' service organization. Would require the veterans' service organization to take all reasonable steps to inter remains received and would exempt the organization from storage charges or additional charges of interment.

Also passed Committee on Judiciary and sent to Floor vote.

Supported by VFW Department of California.

AB 1729 Civil service examinations: veterans' preference. (Mariko Yamada, Davis)

Would permit a member of the Armed Forces, upon successfully passing a state civil service examination, to be awarded the additional veterans' credit up to 12 months after the establishment of the

employment list.

Also passed by Committee on Public Employment and Retirement and sent to Appropriations.

AB 1757 Veterans cemetery. (William Monning, Santa Cruz)

Current law establishes an Endowment Fund to receive donations for the start up of a state veterans cemetery at the site of the former Fort Ord Army Base in Monterey County.

This bill would now direct the California Department of Veterans Affairs to design, develop and construct the California Central Coast State Veterans Cemetery at this site.

Sent to Appropriations.

Supported by VFW Department of California.

AB 1829 Military decorations: fraud. (Paul Cook, Yucaipa. Coauthors, Assembly: Joel Anderson, La Mesa; Tom Berryhill, Modesto; Wesley Chesbro, Eureka; Chuck DeVore, Irvine; Bill Emmerson, Redlands; Nathan Fletcher, San Diego; Danny Gilmore, Hanford; Kevin Jeffries, Riverside; Ted Lieu, Torrance; Brian Nestande, Palm Desert; Roger Niello, Sacramento; Anthony Portantino, Pasadena; Jim Silva, Huntington Beach; Cameron Smyth, Santa Clarita; and Audra Strickland, Camarillo. Coauthors, Senate: Lou Correa, Santa Ana; and Mark DeSaulnier, Antioch.)

Provides that any person who, orally, in writing, or by wearing any military decoration, falsely represents himself or herself to have been awarded any military decoration, as specified, with the intent to defraud, is guilty of a misdemeanor.

Previous legislation made the offense merely an infraction. This bill is an attempt to make the offense a more serious affair.

Also passed by Committee on Public Safety. Sent to Appropriations.

AB 1925 Diversion: veterans Veterans Courts. (Mary Salas, Chula Vista)

Would authorize superior courts to develop and implement veterans courts with the objective of creating of a locally developed collaborative court-supervised veterans mental health program or system that leads to the placement of as many mentally ill offenders who are veterans, including those with post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, military sexual trauma, substance abuse, or any mental health problem stemming from military service, in community treatment as is feasible and consistent with public safety.

Also passed by Committee on Public Safety. Sent to Appropriations.

Supported by VFW Department of California.

AB 1944 Vehicles: special license plates: disabled veterans. (Nathan Fletcher, San Diego)

Has gone through a series of amendments with the basic objective of modifying the current procedures for veterans to obtain disabled veteran license plates or placards to permit them to use the certification of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs concerning their disability rather than requiring an additional examination and certification by another medical provider.

Also passed by Committee on Transportation and Housing. Sent to Appropriations.

In the Assembly:

SB 1057 State holidays: Veterans Day: state office closure. (Jeff Denham, Merced. Coauthors, Senate: Abel Maldonado, Santa Maria; Patricia Wiggins, Santa Rosa. Coauthors, Assembly: Anthony Adams, Hesperia; Mike Davis, Los Angeles; Chuck DeVore, Irvine; Danny Gilmore, Hanford; Stephen Knight, Lancaster; and Jim Nielsen, Biggs.)

Existing law requires all state offices, and the University of California, to be closed on the State holiday, Admissions Day. The law also requires all states offices, except the University of California, to be closed on Veterans Day. In 2009, the State Senate refused to close on Veterans Day.

This bill requires Veterans' Day to be observed by all state agencies on the actual date of November 11.

If this date falls on a Saturday, the holiday will be observed the previous Friday. If the date occurs on Sunday, the holiday will be observed on the following Monday.

The bill states the intent of the Legislature that the University of California be closed on Veterans Day. Passed by the Assembly Committee on Business, Professions, and Consumer Protection and sent to Appropriations.

Since the Legislature is taking a vacation, I will do the same. I expect that the next report will be issued early in August when the committees resume their hearings.

Complete information on all state legislation involving veterans issues is available at the website:

<http://www.califveterans.com>