

California VFW Legislative Report–9-14-08
William Manes, State Legislative/PAC Chairman

This is a continuation of the report from yesterday:

Bills that were passed and sent to the Governor:

AB 1571 Veterans mental health: county plans. (Assembly Committee on Veterans Affairs, Mary Salas, Chula Vista, Chair; Ted Lieu, Torrance; V. Manuel Perez, Cathedral City; Lori Saldana, San Diego; and Mariko Yamada, Vacaville.)

Existing law requires each county mental health program to prepare and submit a 3-year plan to be updated at least annually and approved by the State Department of Mental Health. The plan is to be developed with specified local stakeholders.

This bill would require the local stakeholder planning group to include a representative from a legitimate veterans organization and would require the plan to specifically include recognition of the mental health needs of veterans and how those needs are, or are not, being met.

SB 469 Northern California Veterans Cemetery: fees. (Sam Aanestad, Grass Valley)

Would authorize the fee for the interment of the spouses and children of honorably discharged veterans at the Northern California Veterans Cemetery to be waived if the cemetery administrator determines that the families do not have sufficient means to pay for the costs of interment, and would require any costs for these interments to be paid from nonstate funds.

The bill had been sent to the Governor on August 24 but was returned to the Legislature on September 8 as one of the 72 bills that the Governor wanted to delay for higher priority issues.

SB 644 Civil Service Examinations: veterans' preference. (Jeff Denham, Merced)

Existing law provides that disabled veterans who become eligible for certification from eligible lists by attaining the passing mark established for an entrance examination held on an open, nonpromotional basis are allowed 10 additional points. Other veterans are allowed 5 additional points.

This bill would increase the points for disabled veterans to 15 and other veterans to 10.

The bill had been sent to the Governor on August 28 but was returned to the Legislature on September 8 as one of the 72 bills that the Governor wanted to delay for higher priority issues.

Bills that failed to pass the Legislature:

AB 1340 Absentee voters. (Bonnie Lowenthal, Long Beach, and V. Manuel Perez, Cathedral City. Coauthor, Senate: Denise Moreno Ducheny, San Diego) (Sponsored by Secretary of State Debra Bowen.)

Existing law provides that a special absentee voter must return his or her ballot to the appropriate elections official by the close of the polls on election day to have that ballot counted.

This bill would give that voter 6 days after the election to return his or her ballot to the appropriate elections official and have it counted, provided that the ballot was postmarked on or before the date of the election.

Bill was held under submission by Senate Committee on Appropriations.

This is a real shame. There were great efforts this year to pass legislation that would extend the time for servicemembers overseas to return their ballots. This bill was the best of the lot, was supported by the Secretary of State, and a lot of work went into getting approval during the committee hearings. The bill had absolutely minimum cost but the Appropriations Committee failed to approve it on policy matters □ not fiscal. Apparently we can credit this one to the Committee Chair, Christine Kehoe, who has made it clear in the past that she does not like the military.

This will be the final report until information is available concerning the Governor's actions on these bills. He has until October 11 to complete action on all the bills that the Legislature sent to him in the final days of the 2009 legislative session.

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

<http://www.califveterans.com>