

## **California VFW Legislative Report–9/8/09**

*William Manes, State Legislative/PAC Chairman*

### ***SPECIAL REPORT***

On September 8, the Governor's Office requested that the Legislature take back some 70 bills which had been passed and sent to him for signature. It is reported that the authors of all these bills complied with this request - except Assemblymember Paul Cook for AB 264. This bill would require the Governor to annually proclaim March 30 as "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day" and would encourage schools to conduct exercises on that date to recognize the contributions of those involved in the Vietnam conflict.

The Governor then vetoed AB 264. The veto message states:

"To the Members of the California State Assembly:

I am returning Assembly Bill 264 without my signature.

Our state is facing significant challenges, including the need for comprehensive changes in our policies on water, energy, and corrections and the need to take meaningful steps to stimulate the economy and rein in the rising levels of unemployment. This bill does nothing to address any of these issues. I look forward to considering this measure when these other major issues are addressed.

Sincerely, Arnold Schwarzenegger"

During a telephone conference call on September 9, the Governor's Office indicated that the reason the legislators were requested to return all the bills, and resubmit them later, was that the Governor wanted to have 30 more days to consider his actions on all the bills.

According to Assemblymember Cook, his understanding of the reason for returning the bills was that the Governor wanted the Legislature to concentrate their work on the major policy issues listed in the veto message, water, energy and corrections, and until the Legislature sent him the bills on those subjects, he did not want to consider any other issues. Mr. Cook considered that the "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day" was totally unrelated to these other issues and wanted the Governor to just go ahead and sign that bill.

The Governor's Office is pressuring Mr. Cook to reintroduce his bill again, get it passed, and send it back for signature. There are only two days left in the legislative session. This action could be possible, but highly unlikely at this stage. However, Mr. Cook is investigating the possibility. He is also considering other possible actions, including trying to override the veto. The latter would certainly add more fuel to the fire of what has become a highly politicized issue over a veterans bill - and a bill over which many veterans consider to be very important and above politics.

I will provide updates on this issue as the information becomes available.