

**California VFW Legislative Report–3-19-2010**  
***William Manes, State Legislative/PAC Chairman***

Some bills which were previously reported have had their first committee hearings:

AB 1703 State Nursing Assumption Program of Loans for Education: veterans homes. (Stephen Knight, Lancaster)

An existing program provides for the state to assume part of the cost of education loans, up to \$20,000, for persons who graduate from nursing programs and work in state facilities.

This bill would provide for an additional \$5,000 per year of additional qualifying service, with a maximum loan assumption amount equal to the participant's total outstanding liability under the qualifying loans, for participants completing 5 or more years of qualifying clinical registered nursing service at a state-operated veterans home.

Passed by the Assembly Committee on Higher Education on March 16

AB 1829 Military decorations: fraud. (Paul Cook, Yucaipa)

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.

Passed by Assembly Committee on Public Safety March 16.

The following are additional bills related to veterans issues which are starting the committee review process:

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

Would authorize superior courts to develop and implement veterans courts for eligible veterans of the United States military with the objective of, among other things, creation of a dedicated calendar or 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 of the United States military, 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.

AB 2143 The Department of Veterans Affairs: consolidation of services to veterans. (Danny Gilmore, Hanford)

Would declare the intent of the Legislature to subsequently provide for the consolidation under the jurisdiction of the Department of Veterans Affairs and the California Veterans Board or all programs that currently bestow any benefits for which veterans may be eligible but which are currently under the jurisdiction of other state agencies, and to provide for a commensurate transfer of staff and other assets from those agencies to the department and to the board.

This is an interesting concept but raises very serious questions concerning feasibility. Some of the veterans benefits currently managed by other state agencies include:

College Tuition Fee Waivers For Veterans' Dependents

Non-Resident College Fee Waiver

Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise Opportunities

Disabled Veteran License Plates

Veterans Preference In California Civil Service Examinations

Fishing And Hunting Licenses

Employment And Unemployment Insurance Assistance

State Parks And Recreation Pass

Business License, Tax And Fee Waiver

Disabled Veteran Property Tax Exemptions

## Veteran Homeowners Property Tax Exemptions

AB 2651 Veterans farm and home purchases. (Stephen Knight, Lancaster)

The acts authorizing the various bonds issues for CAL-VET Farm and Home Loan Program require the Controller to pay, from the General Fund, the principal and interest on the bonds when due, and to be reimbursed for those costs from the Veterans' Farm and Home Building Fund of 1943.

This bill would authorize the Controller to establish a zero-balance account within the General Fund and to transfer to that account, from the Veterans' Home Building Fund of 1943, those amounts necessary to make future payments for the principal and interest on the bonds as it comes due.

The effect of this change would be to provide an increase in the funds available to the State General Fund and so reduce at least the appearance of the state's deficit. It would be another accounting gimmick in trying to balance the State Budget.

AB 2609 Firearms: handgun safety certificate: exemptions. (Joel Anderson, La Mesa)

Existing law requires, with certain exceptions, that a person obtain a handgun safety certificate before purchasing or receiving a handgun.

Existing law exempts, among others, honorably retired members of the United States Armed Forces, National Guard, or Air National Guard, from this requirement. Previous version of the law exempted honorably discharged members of the military services from this requirement.

This bill would restore honorably discharged members of the United States Armed Forces, National Guard, or Air National Guard, instead of retired members to those exempted from the requirement for a safety certificate.

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

<http://www.califveterans.com>

Reminder – VFW Legislative Day at the Capitol is scheduled on April 20. The official invitation announcement is attached.