

Date of Hearing: March 24, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

Pilar Schiavo, Chair

AB 1775 (Ward) – As Introduced February 9, 2026

SUBJECT: Veterans.

SUMMARY: Adds to the requirements for expedited licensure for veterans and spouses by regulatory boards under the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) an applicant who has served as an active duty member of the United States (U.S.) Armed Forces and received a discharge solely as a result of Executive Order No. (EO) 14183. Requires the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) to help fund service providers who will educate veterans about discharge upgrades and assist veterans in filing discharge upgrade applications at no cost. Requires CalVet to establish the Veteran's Housing and Supportive Services Grant Program, as specified. Specifically, **this bill**:

- 1) Requires a regulatory board under DCA to expedite an initial license to an applicant who provides satisfactory evidence that the applicant has served as an active duty member of the United States Armed Forces and received a discharge solely as a result of Executive Order No. 14183 issued on January 27, 2025. Adds to the annual report to the Legislature by DCA the number of applications for expedited licenses received from those who received a discharge solely because of EO 14183 issued on January 27, 2025.
- 2) Requires CalVet through the Veteran's Military Discharge Upgrade Grant Program (Grant Program) to fund service providers who, at no cost, will educate veterans about discharge upgrades and assist qualifying veterans in filing discharge upgrade applications. Adds the requirement for the Grant Program that CalVet is to prioritize veterans who can demonstrate their characterization of service was connected to gender identity.
- 3) Requires CalVet to establish the Veteran's Housing and Supportive Services Grant Program to help fund service providers who, at no cost, will provide housing supports for veterans being discharged from service. Requires CalVet to prioritize veteran recipients who can demonstrate their less than honorable characterization of service was connected to a mental health condition, traumatic brain injury, sexual assault or harassment, or sexual orientation or who are able to demonstrate their characterization of service was connected to gender identity.

EXISTING FEDERAL FORCE OF LAW: EO 14183, titled "Prioritizing Military Excellence and Readiness" and signed by President Trump on January 27, 2025, mandates the exclusion of most transgender individuals from military service. It directs the Department of Defense (DoD) to update medical standards, restrict service based on biological sex, and rescind previous policies. Key aspects include:

- 1) Transgender Service Restriction: States that gender dysphoria or a gender identity different from one's biological sex is inconsistent with military readiness.
- 2) Medical and Policy Updates: Orders the DoD to update medical standards to exclude individuals with a history of gender dysphoria and halt gender-affirming medical procedures.

- 3) Facilities and Pronouns: Restricts the use of sleeping, changing, and bathing facilities to those designated for a member's biological sex and prohibits the use of identification-based pronouns.
- 4) Implementation and Scope: Applies to all military branches and the Coast Guard, revoking the Biden Administration's Executive Order 14004 which enabled all qualified Americans, including transgender individuals, to serve in the U.S. Armed Forces openly, reversing restrictions from the previous administration.
- 5) Separation and Discharge: Reports indicate the policy leads to the separation of transgender personnel and bans the enlistment of new transgender individuals, effective in 2025.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Establishes DCA within the Business, Consumer Services, and Housing Agency. (Business and Professions Code (BPC) §100)
- 2) Requires a DCA regulatory board to expedite and assist the initial licensure process for an applicant who supplies satisfactory evidence to the board that the applicant has served as an active duty member of the Armed Forces of the United States and was honorably discharged. (BPC § 115.4)
- 3) Establishes CalVet and authorizes it to assist veterans and their dependents and survivors in obtaining privileges, preferences, care, or compensation provided by federal and state law. (Military and Veterans Code (MVC) § 60 and 690 - 699.5)
- 4) Requires CalVet to establish the Grant Program to help fund service providers who, for free or low cost, will educate veterans about discharge upgrades and assist qualifying veterans in filing discharge upgrade applications. Allows CalVet to prioritize receipt of services to veterans who can demonstrate their less-than-honorable characterization of service was connected to a mental health condition, traumatic brain injury, sexual assault or harassment or sexual orientation. (MVC § 885)
- 5) Enacts the Veterans Housing and Homeless Prevention Act of 2014 to provide for the acquisition, construction, rehabilitation, and preservation of affordable multifamily supportive housing, affordable transitional housing, affordable rental housing, or related facilities for veterans and their families to allow veterans to access and maintain housing stability. (MVC § 987.001 - 987.011)

FISCAL EFFECT: This bill has not been analyzed by a fiscal committee.

COMMENTS:

- 1) **PURPOSE OF THIS BILL.** According to the author, this bill “is a vital lifeline to ensure we provide critical housing, employment, and transition-to-civilian-life support for service members being discharged from the U.S. military as a result of President Donald Trump’s Executive Order (EO) 14183, which targets transgender service members. California has a responsibility to step in when the federal government turns its back on people who served honorably. These service members are being forced out of service not because of misconduct or performance, but because of who they are. AB 1775 ensures that California does not

compound that injustice by leaving veterans without housing, jobs, or a clear path to stability.”

- 2) **BACKGROUND.** As of March 2026, the DoD is actively purging transgender service members from the U.S. military following a May 2025 Supreme Court ruling that allowed a wide-reaching ban to take effect. The Pentagon has moved from a voluntary separation phase into an active involuntary separation process for the thousands of openly transgender troops currently serving. The Pentagon is currently removing thousands of transgender troops as part of an effort to eliminate "gender ideology" from the military. Administrative separation boards have been ordered to find any transgender service member with a past or current diagnosis of gender dysphoria "unfit" and separate them from service. While approximately 1,000 service members chose voluntary separation in 2025, there are roughly 4,240 active-duty, Guard, and Reserve members with a formal diagnosis of gender dysphoria who are now subject to involuntary removal. Advocacy groups estimate the total number of impacted individuals could be as high as 15,000. Critics and service members have reported that the current separation boards often have a predetermined outcome, providing little to no due process for those trying to save their careers.
 - a) **An *Associated Press* article**, “Transgender troops are now being identified for removal under Pentagon orders” highlighted a significant issue that the Pentagon’s estimated figures may not fully capture the reality, as some individuals may have enlisted after completing their transition and might not have undergone medical or surgical procedures that could reveal their status. Furthermore, officials raised the possibility that health privacy laws could restrict their ability to access and report accurate information from service records. It’s important to consider the challenges these brave individuals face while serving their country.
 - b) **The RAND Corporation's report**, “Assessing the Implications of Allowing Transgender Personnel to Serve Openly,” estimates that there are as many as 6,630 transgender service members currently in active duty. Even when considering the higher estimates, RAND concluded that less than 0.1% of the total force would face deployment restrictions in any given year due to the time required for transition-related care. Their examination of other nations, like the UK and Canada, that permit transgender service members revealed minimal to no adverse effects on unit cohesion, operational effectiveness, or readiness. While commanders noted some initial bias, they reported that such sentiments generally faded over time.
- 3) **SUPPORT.** This bill is cosponsored by Equality California, Out in National Security, and SPARTA Pride. Additionally, numerous organizations including, the California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls, Planned Parenthood Affiliates of California, Advocates for Trans Equality, and Courage California all write in support of this bill. Supporters argue that this bill is essential for providing critical assistance to transgender service members who were discharged under unjust federal policies. On January 27, 2025, President Trump signed Executive Order 14183, which called for the removal of transgender individuals from military service—not due to any form of misconduct or failure to meet standards, but purely because of who they are. While two federal courts initially blocked the ban, the U.S. Supreme Court lifted those injunctions on May 6, 2025, enabling the Department of Defense to commence the discharge of transgender personnel.

Transgender service members in California have proudly served our nation, holding to the same standards as their colleagues. Yet, they have faced discharges based solely on their identity, with no credible evidence showing that transgender individuals are unfit to serve. The separation process has been swift and harsh, leaving many with inadequate guidance on navigating the so-called “voluntary” separation paperwork, abrupt cuts to their pay and benefits, and a future shrouded in uncertainty. This has denied transgender members the necessary time and resources to secure housing and plan for their next steps in the wake of this order.

This bill aims to bridge the gaps that have left numerous transgender veterans vulnerable, ensuring they receive the same expedited licensing and support as any other service member who is honorably discharged.

4) PREVIOUS LEGISLATION.

- a) SJR 6 (Caballero, et al), Resolution Chapter 173, Statutes of 2024, urged the President and the Congress of the United States to address, with effective policies, the issue of servicemembers who were unjustly discharged under “*Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell*” or predecessor provisions, in order to unify efforts to upgrade discharges issued under the Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell policy, and to restore benefits.
- b) AB 325 (Irwin), Chapter 377, Statutes of 2022, requires CalVet to establish the Grant Program to help fund service providers who will educate veterans about discharge upgrades and assist veterans in filing discharge upgrade applications at little or no cost.
- c) AJR 44 (Bloom), Resolution Chapter 164, Statutes of 2014, urges the DoD, Congress, and the President to create a more efficient process of upgrading the status of those who were “dishonorably” or other than honorably discharged from the U.S. Armed Forces, and to provide benefits, including applicable spousal benefits, to those veterans discharged solely on the basis of their sexual orientation.
- d) AJR 19 (Pan), Resolution Chapter 154, Statutes of 2013, urges Congress and the President to provide benefits, including applicable spousal benefits, to those veterans discriminated against solely on the basis of their sexual orientation.
- e) AB 1505 (Pan), Chapter 397, Statutes of 2012, requires the state to reinstate benefits to veterans that have their benefits reinstated by the federal government if the benefits were originally denied solely on the basis of sexual orientation. Requires CalVet to distribute information regarding military discharge upgrades.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

Advocates for Trans Equality
Alliance for TransYouth Liberation
California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls
California LGBTQ Health and Human Services Network
CalPride Valle Central
Courage California

El/La Para Translatinas
Equality California
Families United for Trans Rights (FUTR) East Bay Chapter
Gender Affirming Professionals
Lyon-Martin Community Health Services
Out in National Security
PFLAG Clayton-concord
PFLAG Fresno
PFLAG San Francisco
Planned Parenthood Affiliates of California
Public Counsel
Rainbow Families Action Bay Area
San Diego Pride
Sparta Pride
The San Diego LGBT Community Center
The TransLatin@ Coalition
Transcanwork
Viet Rainbow of Orange County
West Hollywood/Hernan Molina, Governmental Affairs Liaison

Opposition

None on file.

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