
SENATE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Senator María Elena Durazo, Chair

2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No: AB 2219
Author: Schiavo
Version: 4/8/26

Hearing Date: 7/1/26
Fiscal: Yes
Consultant: Vargas

VETERANS

Modernizes and standardizes the county veterans service officer program.

Background

County governance. Counties fall into two types: “general law” and “charter.” General law counties are organized according to the generally applicable laws for county governance established by the Legislature that set the number, appointment, and election procedures for county officials, including the board of supervisors.

Charter counties have greater leeway to determine their own governance structure, including to elect additional supervisors and appoint or elect additional officers. A new charter, or the amendment of an existing charter, may be proposed by the board of supervisors, a charter commission, or an initiative petition. There are 14 charter counties: Alameda, Butte, El Dorado, Fresno, Los Angeles, Orange, Placer, Sacramento, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Tehama. Most large counties are charter counties: eight of the ten largest counties by population have adopted charters.

All counties elect or appoint a variety of county officials. The California Constitution requires all counties to elect a sheriff, district attorney, assessor, and board of supervisors, and provides that the board of supervisors sets the number, compensation, tenure, and appointment of employees. State law lists the officers that general law counties must have.

County Veterans Service Officers (CVSO). State law allows, but does not require, counties to appoint CVSOs. CVSO’s are the primary local point of contact for many veterans and their families seeking assistance with federal, state, and local benefits. CVSOs serve as a link between veterans and the wide array of benefits, services, and community networks essential for long-term success following military service. Their services are provided free of charge and include assistance with disability compensation, pensions, health care, education, employment, housing-related referrals, family support, and other services. California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) and CVSOs work together to help ensure veterans and their families are represented by trained and accredited professions, with CVSOs serving as the front-line support for veterans and their families, while CalVet assists with claims development, representation, and appeals.

California’s system is locally administered, which means that services may vary significantly by county. Offices may differ in staffing levels, county government placement, appointment availability, walk-in access, after-hours services, virtual services, satellite or mobile service

options, outreach capacity, and coordination with other local programs. Currently, 57 out of California's 58 counties have CVSOs.

The author seeks to enhance collaboration between CalVet and CVSO's to help veterans and family members receive consistent and effective access to benefits and services.

Proposed Law

Assembly Bill 2219 makes changes to the CVSO position and directs CalVet to standardize certain procedures.

CVSOs. AB 2219 allows each county to prescribe the qualifications of the county service officer except that the appointee must obtain and maintain accreditation from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs through CalVet within nine months after appointment and develop minimum training requirements necessary for accreditation, including to:

- Identify and address disparities in access to earned benefits based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation as supported by data;
- Improve public awareness of free disability claim resources; and
- Ensure proper data collection to track system improvements.

If a vacancy occurs in the position, AB 2219 requires it to be filled within 12 months .

CalVet processes. AB 2219 requires CalVet, by January 1, 2029, in consultation with the California Association of County Veterans Service Officers (CACVSO), to develop and implement a statewide work queue for appointments, claims assistance, and other services provided to veterans. The "statewide work queue" is an electronic workload management system under the authority of the department that distributes disability claims and appeals among county veterans services offices across the state, regardless of where the veteran lives.

CalVet and CACVSO must coordinate on the design, data-sharing protocols, and implementation of the statewide work queue. The statewide work queue must be operational and accessible to all county veterans service officers by January 1, 2029. The bill also states that participation in the statewide work queue must not negatively impact performance-based funding calculations and CalVet must establish a separate workload unit category for services provided through the statewide work queue.

AB 2219 requires CalVet, in consultation with CACVSO, to develop a service capacity and performance framework to inform funding allocations for CVSOs. However, before implementing any substantial modification to the funding allocation methodology, CalVet needs to submit a report to the Legislature describing the proposed framework and its anticipated fiscal and operational impact. The service capacity and performance framework must consider the following:

- The size of the veteran population;
- Workload activity;
- Geographic access;
- The participation rate of veterans at that office;
- The value of new or increased federal benefits obtained;

- The organizational structure of the office; and
- Service-related measures that indicate the experience of a veteran receiving services from an office.

AB 2219 requires CalVet, by no later than January 1, 2029, and every three years thereafter, to prepare a report analyzing data regarding the configuration, structure, and operations of each county veterans service office. The report must include:

- The location of each county veterans service office, including satellite, mobile, and remote capabilities, and hours of operation for in-person and virtual appointments;
- The number of employees in each office, including employees whose primary duties support veterans benefits claims, employees in administrative roles, supervisors, and employees dedicated to outreach or specialized service populations;
- The organizational placement of the county veterans service office within county government and its reporting relationship;
- The primary sources of funding supporting the office, including county general fund support, state allocations, federal grants, and other grant-based or restricted funding streams;
- A description of cross-program collaboration and services provided in coordination with employment services, behavioral health services, housing and homelessness programs, justice-involved veteran programs, and other initiatives serving at-risk veteran populations; and
- A copy of the report is to be shared with the Legislature, Department of Finance, State Department of Health Care Services, and the California Veterans Board.

AB 2219 also states that CalVet, in consultation with CACVSO, must develop a statewide digital survey platform to collect feedback from veterans following appointments or services provided by county veterans service offices. The platform must be designed to measure access, trust, service effectiveness, and overall experience while minimizing administrative burdens on counties.

Comments

1. Purpose of the bill. According to the author, “AB 2219, the Faster Service for Veterans Act! Last year, while working on SB 694, I made it my mission to connect with colleagues, stakeholders, and our amazing veterans. It was vital to me to hear what we’re doing right in linking veterans and their families with the benefits and services they've earned, as well as to discover areas where we can create impactful enhancements.

“County Veteran Service Officers, or CVSOs, are incredible local champions who embody the spirit of duty! They stand at the dynamic crossroads where policy merges with the brave individuals who have served our nation. But they do so much more than just advocate for benefits! CVSOs are essential in linking veterans to amazing opportunities in employment, education, healthcare, and family support—helping to foster a strong sense of purpose, stability, and belonging.

“AB 2219 will accelerate the modernization of assistance delivery to veterans, facilitate easier access to their benefits, and provide more efficient support to those who have selflessly served

our nation. This bill improves collaboration between CalVet and CVSOs to ensure that California’s veterans and their families receive the comprehensive support they truly deserve.”

2. Don’t need to worry. Current law does not require counties to appoint CVSO’s, although 57 out of 58 counties currently employ one. The County of Alpine currently does not have a CVSO. AB 2219 requires a county to fill a vacancy, if there is one. While the practical impact may be limited because nearly every county already has a CVSO, the bill removes local discretion to leave the position vacant and could create an administrative obligation for counties to recruit and appoint a replacement when a vacancy occurs.

3. Mandate. The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local governments for the costs of new or expanded state mandated local programs. Because AB 2219 adds to the duties of local officials, Legislative Counsel says the bill imposes a new state mandate. But AB 2219 disclaims the state’s responsibility for providing reimbursement by citing local governments’ authority to charge for the costs of implementing the bill’s provisions.

4. Incoming! The Senate Rules Committee has ordered a double referral of AB 2219: first to the Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs which approved AB 2219 at its June 23rd hearing on a vote of 4-0, and second to the Committee on Local Government.

Assembly Actions

Assembly Military and Veterans Affairs Committee:	8-0
Assembly Appropriations Committee:	15-0
Assembly Floor:	70-0

Support and Opposition (6/26/26)

Support: American Legion, Department of California
 Amvets - Department of California
 Amvets, Department of California
 California Association of County Veterans Service Officers
 California State Commanders Veterans Council
 City of Fairfield
 Military Officers Association of America, California Council of Chapters
 Shasta County Board of Supervisors
 Vietnam Veterans of America, California State Council

Opposition: None Submitted

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