
THIRD READING

Bill No: AB 81
Author: Ta (R), et al.
Introduced: 12/19/24
Vote: 21

SENATE MILITARY & VETERANS COMMITTEE: 5-0, 7/14/25

AYES: Archuleta, Grove, McNerney, Menjivar, Umberg

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE: 7-0, 8/29/25

AYES: Caballero, Seyarto, Cabaldon, Dahle, Grayson, Richardson, Wahab

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 78-0, 6/4/25 - See last page for vote

SUBJECT: Veterans: mental health

SOURCE: Author

DIGEST: This bill requires the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) to establish a program to fund, upon appropriation by the Legislature, an academic study of mental health among women veterans in California, and requires CalVet to submit a report that summarizes the findings and recommendations of the study to the Legislature no later than June 30, 2029.

ANALYSIS:

Existing law establishes CalVet to, among other services, provide veterans and their dependents and survivors with assistance in processing service-related disability claims, assistance in obtaining affordable housing, and information about health ailments associated with military service.

This bill CalVet to establish a program to fund, upon appropriation, an academic study of mental health among women veterans in California and submit a report on the study's findings to the Legislature by June 30, 2029.

Background

On January 23, 2024, CalVet, the California Research Bureau, and the VetFund Foundation launched women veterans' survey. The survey closed on June 11, 2024, with 3,822 individuals responding, of which 2,716 were qualified responses after removing those who did not identify as women or had no branch of service. Over one-third of respondents reported mixed experiences with specific Veterans Health Administration hospitals or clinics, vet centers, and overall medical care. The second most common theme, mentioned by roughly a quarter of respondents, was the support they received or the ongoing need for assistance securing specific benefits. Respondents reported challenges navigating the VA system, including difficulties in filing disability claims, finding competent mental health providers, or locating knowledgeable advocates.

FISCAL EFFECT: Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: Yes Local: No

CalVet estimates one-time General Fund cost to CalVet of \$500,000 to contract with an academic entity since it lacks in-house expertise to perform the study. CalVet also estimates General Fund costs of approximately \$240,000 in the first year, \$220,000 in the second year, and \$100,000 in the third year for two limited-term staff to create, award, and oversee the contract and submit the legislative report. The Bill's provisions would be subject to an appropriation.

SUPPORT: (Verified 8/29/2025)

American Legion, Department of California
AMVETs, Department of California
California Association of County Veterans Service Officers
California State Commanders Veterans Council
County of Orange
Military Officers Association of America, California Council of Chapters
San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce
Vietnam Veterans of America, California State Council

OPPOSITION:

None received

ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT:

According to the author: AB 81 would provide a much-needed picture of the mental health challenges facing California's women veterans. This important and uncontroversial legislation would direct the California Department of Veterans Affairs to conduct an academic study of mental health among women veterans in

California. This study would include an analysis of mental health stressors, risk factors, suicide rates, treatment modalities, barriers to care, and other relevant information. Given California's rapidly growing population of women veterans, this legislation would ensure that, instead of only identifying concerning statistics, the state is researching and remedying the root causes driving mental health challenges facing women veterans.

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 78-0, 6/4/25

AYES: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Alvarez, Arambula, Ávila Farías, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Castillo, Chen, Connolly, Davies, DeMaio, Dixon, Elhawary, Ellis, Flora, Fong, Gabriel, Gallagher, Garcia, Gipson, Jeff Gonzalez, Mark González, Hadwick, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Irwin, Jackson, Kalra, Krell, Lackey, Lowenthal, Macedo, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Ransom, Celeste Rodriguez, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Sanchez, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Ta, Tangipa, Valencia, Wallis, Ward, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

NO VOTE RECORDED: Lee

Prepared by: Bill Herms / M.&V.A. / (916) 651-1503
8/29/25 20:27:44

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