



County Administrative Office
Governmental & Legislative Affairs

Josh Candelaria
Director

June 26, 2015

Honorable Ricardo Lara
Chair, Senate Appropriations
State Capitol Building, Room 2206
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 171 (Irwin) – As amended May 28, 2015 – **SUPPORT**

Dear Chairman Lara:

The County Board of San Bernardino is pleased to support AB 171, which would authorize the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CDVA) to develop an allocation formula based upon performance standards that encourage innovation and reward outstanding service provided by County Veterans Service Offices (CVSOs).

According to the State CVSO's most recent annual report, in FY 2013-14, when CVSO state assistance was temporarily increased from \$2.6 million to \$5.6 million, CVSOs were able to increase federal benefits to California veterans by over \$100 million. In San Bernardino County, new or increased federal benefits to eligible veterans and their dependents increased by \$31.6 million from prior year and totaled \$85 million, the highest in the state, as a direct result of CVSO assistance.

In San Bernardino County, our CVSO has seen a 106 percent increase in walk-in clients from 13,332 to more than 27,512 over the past nine years. Telephone contacts for the same period have increased 32 percent and CVSO staff's caseloads have also increased on an average of 66 percent over the past seven years. Increased funding allocation will allow CVSOs to continue to handle the increasing need for veteran assistance while maintaining the highest standards and efficiencies.

An increase in CVSO funding has resulted in larger amounts of federal benefits to veterans and their families, thereby also benefitting the local economy. AB 171 serves as a vehicle to increase funding to high performing CVSOs serving our deserving veterans in the communities in which they live.

For the above reasons, the County of San Bernardino supports AB 171 and respectfully requests an "Aye" vote on this important issue. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact Josh Candelaria, Director of Governmental and Legislative Affairs at (909) 387-4821 or jcandelaria@sbccounty.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James Ramos".

JAMES RAMOS
Board of Supervisors Chairman
Third District Supervisor
County of San Bernardino

c: The Honorable Jacqui Irwin
Honorable Members and Consultants, Senate Appropriations Committee
County of San Bernardino Legislative Delegation

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