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LANCE M. LARSON
Director of Legislative Affairs

March 23, 2010

The Honorable Paul Cook
California State Assembly
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: **AB 1908 (Cook)** – As amended March 11, 2010 – **SPONSOR**

Dear Assemblyman Cook:

The San Bernardino Board of Supervisors is pleased to sponsor AB 1908. This measure would authorize the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CDVA) to modify the design of the existing veteran special license plate to make it more marketable to California citizens. AB 1908 would also require that by July 1, 2011, the California Department of Motor Vehicle (DMV) must make the veteran special license plate available on their website for ordering. Currently, every other special license plate available for ordering is already reflected on the DMV's website. Additionally, this measure would remove a provision in current law which requires one-half of the proceeds from replacement decals of the plate be deposited into the Environmental License Plate Fund.

Existing Law established a veteran's license plate program and created the Veterans Service Office Fund for the CDVA to use to disburse revenues from fees collected by the DMV in connection with issuing the veteran plate. These revenues are distributed to counties throughout California for the operations of their county veteran service offices.

Currently, the California County Veteran Service Officers (CVSO) receives partial funding for their operations from revenue derived from the sale of the veterans' special license plate. The intention of this plate was to be available to all licensed Californians for purchase. Due to the current design of the plate which simply reads "Veteran" with a red and blue line on the bottom portion of the plate, it sends the message that only veterans may purchase and display the plate. This issue is believed to hamper the sales goals of the CVSOs, thus hampering their operating funding stream.

CVSOs provide outreach and advocacy to veterans throughout California. With offices in 54 of California's 58 counties, and employing over 250 local government employees, the CVSOs represent a significant resource to our veteran community. This significant human resource represents a highly effective and low-cost solution to the challenges of service delivery to California's large veteran community. Because CVSOs are located in communities statewide, they are often the initial point of local contact for claimants accessing the VA benefit system.

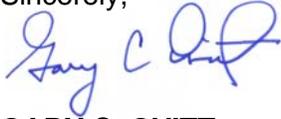
In San Bernardino County alone, with a land area of approximately 18,000 square miles, our veteran service offices have seen a 69% increase in walk-in clients from 12,100 in 2004 to more than 20,400 in 2009. Telephone contacts for the same period have increased 47% from 30,000 to 44,500. The County's veteran services officer's staff's caseloads have also increased on average of 44% from 330 to 750 in just five years. The services these offices provide are essential to the veteran population in our County due to the fact that there is no state or federal VA staff to serve our veterans and their families.

The mission of the government of the County of San Bernardino is to satisfy its customers by providing service that promotes the health, safety, well being, and quality of life of its residents according to the County Charter, general laws, and the will of the people it serves.

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The CVSO's desperately need funding to continue to meet the needs. AB 1908 serves as a vehicle to do just that, without General Fund impact. For these reason, the San Bernardino Board of Supervisors is pleased to sponsor AB 1908. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Lance Larson, the County's Director of Legislative Affairs at (909) 387-4821. The Board thanks you your attention in this matter.

Sincerely,



GARY C. OVITT
Chairman, Board of Supervisors