



County Administrative Office
Governmental & Legislative Affairs

Josh Candelaria
Director

March 9, 2020

The Honorable Sabrina Cervantes
California State Assembly
State Capitol Building
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 2688 (Cervantes) – As Introduced on February 20, 2020 - SUPPORT

Dear Assemblymember Cervantes:

The County of San Bernardino is pleased to support AB 2688 which seeks to increase local assistance funding for the County Veterans Service Officers (CVSOs) from the current \$5.6 million GF statewide to \$11 million GF statewide.

CVSOs are local, county employees who are nationally accredited by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to prepare and file VA claims that connect veterans to their federal benefits, which they earned by virtue of the military service. CVSOs play a vital role in serving California's large and diverse veteran population, helping to link them to the benefits and resources they need. In 2019, CVSOs brought in \$458 million in new federal benefits for California veterans and their families. These monetary benefits are paid directly to the veteran, whereupon they are spent in the local economy on goods and services.

During fiscal years 1995 to 2016, the state appropriated a total of \$58.2 million from the General Fund for its share of the cost of the CVSOs. As a result of this investment, CVSOs were able to assist local veterans in obtaining \$5.4 billion in new federal monies. This is a return of about \$93 brought into the state's economy for every \$1 the state allocates to CVSOs.

There is a large number of veterans who are not aware that they are eligible for these federal benefits, and CVSOs are often the first to inform them about their eligibility. CVSOs are the bridge to finding the correct benefits for qualified veterans. They link veterans to the appropriate programs within the community and can reduce the stress on veterans by dealing with the VA directly.

For the above reasons, the County of San Bernardino supports AB 2688. If you have any questions regarding the County's position, please do not hesitate to contact Josh Candelaria, Director of Governmental and Legislative Affairs at (909) 387-4821 or jcandelaria@sbcountry.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Curt Hagman".

Curt Hagman
Fourth District Supervisor
Chairman, San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors

cc: San Bernardino County Legislative Delegation

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