

Assembly Bill No. 717

CHAPTER 692

An act to amend Sections 66.5 and 72 of, to add Section 73.4 to, and to repeal Section 69.5 of, the Military and Veterans Code, relating to veterans.

[Approved by Governor October 10, 2013. Filed with
Secretary of State October 10, 2013.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 717, Chávez. Veterans.

(1) Existing law establishes the California Veterans Board, composed of 7 members with specified qualifications who are appointed by the Governor and subject to the confirmation of the Senate, to determine the policies for all operations of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

This bill would require the board to advise the department and the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs on policies for operations of the department, and would require the department to respond to all proposed policy changes offered by the board prior to the next scheduled meeting of the board. This bill would also eliminate certain qualifications to be a member of the board, and require every board member to be a member in good standing with a congressionally chartered veteran service organization.

(2) Existing law requires the board to annually report to the Legislature regarding the activities, accomplishments, and expenditures of the board.

This bill would repeal this requirement.

(3) Existing law sets forth the duties of the secretary and the board with regard to the administration of the department to benefit California veterans.

This bill would require the secretary and the board to each seek to confer with the California State Commanders Veterans Council at least twice per calendar year on issues affecting California veterans.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(a) It is the intent of the Legislature to make the California Veterans Board more responsive to California's veterans by removing outdated language from the Military and Veterans Code, and by removing unnecessary professional requirements for board members, thereby increasing the number of veterans eligible for appointment by the Governor.

(b) It is the intent of the Legislature that the changes to law made by this act have no impact or effect on the ability of a veteran to appeal any decision made by a division of the Department of Veterans Affairs to the California

Veterans Board, as allowed by Section 86 of the Military and Veterans Code, including, but not limited to, an appeal regarding the denial of admission to a Veterans' Home of California.

SEC. 2. Section 66.5 of the Military and Veterans Code is amended to read:

66.5. (a) Every member of the board shall be a member in good standing with a congressionally chartered veteran service organization.

(b) One member of the board shall have substantial training, professional knowledge, or experience in the issues faced by female veterans which may include, but are not limited to, the following issues:

- (1) Combat-related disorders.
- (2) Sexual trauma.
- (3) Homelessness.

(c) Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit any member of the board from serving the remainder of his or her term.

SEC. 3. Section 69.5 of the Military and Veterans Code is repealed.

SEC. 4. Section 72 of the Military and Veterans Code is amended to read:

72. The California Veterans Board shall advise the department and secretary on policies for operations of the department. The department shall respond to all proposed policy changes offered by the California Veterans Board prior to the next scheduled meeting of the board.

SEC. 5. Section 73.4 is added to the Military and Veterans Code, to read:

73.4. The secretary and the board shall each seek to confer with the California State Commanders Veterans Council at least twice per calendar year on issues affecting California veterans.