

Introduced by Senator Nielsen

June 30, 2015

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 78—Relative to veterans.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

SCR 78, as introduced, Nielsen. Veterans: Team AMVETS.

This measure would commend AMVETS Department of California, also known as Team AMVETS, for providing benefits and services to veterans, and for playing an important role in the community for 70 years.

Fiscal committee: no.

- 1 WHEREAS, The unprecedented call to military service
2 demanded by World War II led to a record number of returning
3 war veterans in need of assistance and support; and
4 WHEREAS, The roots of AMVETS-National can be traced
5 back to a gathering of 18 veterans in Kansas City, Missouri, on
6 December 10, 1944, who named themselves “The American
7 Veterans” of World War II; and
8 WHEREAS, This group sought to provide more comprehensive
9 assistance than was currently available from the organizations run
10 by veterans of earlier wars and those operating on college campuses
11 during that time; and
12 WHEREAS, On July 23, 1947, AMVETS-National became the
13 first World War II organization chartered by Congress when
14 President Harry S. Truman signed Public Law 216 (H.R. 1888),
15 giving AMVETS a federal charter under Title 36 of the United
16 States Code and status as a 501(c)(19) nonprofit veterans service
17 organization; and

1 WHEREAS, In honor and recognition of the sacrifices made by
2 all veterans, membership in AMVETS is open to anyone who is
3 currently serving or has honorably served in the United States
4 Armed Forces, Coast Guard, and Merchant Marines, as well as
5 the National Guard and reserve components; and

6 WHEREAS, On October 20, 1945, the AMVETS Department
7 of California was established and today has over 12,000 members
8 and over 50 local posts in California’s communities; and

9 WHEREAS, AMVETS Department of California is also known
10 as “Team AMVETS” to reflect its mission to serve at the forefront
11 of community and veterans’ services for the State of California,
12 and that any patriotic citizen can be a part of Team AMVETS
13 through volunteerism and donating used clothing and household
14 goods to the Team AMVETS Thrift Stores; and

15 WHEREAS, Team AMVETS is involved in many aspects of
16 service to veterans and the community. In 2014, AMVETS service
17 officers assisted California veterans in filing 16,365 claims, which
18 resulted in new and retroactive claim payments of almost \$39
19 million for California veterans; and

20 WHEREAS, Team AMVETS has a partnership between the
21 federal Department of Veterans Affairs and the AMVETS
22 Department of California Service Foundation called the Welcome
23 Home Program, which offers furnishings and household items to
24 homeless veterans who receive HUD assistance throughout the
25 state and supports the federal Department of Veterans Affairs’
26 goal to end veteran homelessness by 2015; and

27 WHEREAS, Team AMVETS is active in advocating on behalf
28 of veterans and their dependents before the Legislature, the state
29 Department of Veterans Affairs, and state and local agencies, as
30 well as supporting California’s National Guard; and

31 WHEREAS, Team AMVETS sponsors legislation, supports and
32 monitors approximately 100 veteran-related bills per legislative
33 session, and actively monitors aspects of the state budget process,
34 which affect such issues as veterans’ homes, CalVet, National
35 Guard, County Veterans Service Officers, and veterans’ outreach
36 programs; and

37 WHEREAS, The Team AMVETS military funeral honor guards
38 average 4,000 military funerals a year, comprising an average of
39 20,000 volunteer hours, to veterans’ families across the Golden
40 State, at no cost; and

1 WHEREAS, The federal Department of Veterans Affairs
2 Voluntary Service was founded in 1946 to provide for veterans in
3 federal Department of Veterans Affairs healthcare facilities. The
4 federal Department of Veterans Affairs' Voluntary Service is the
5 largest volunteer program in the federal government, with more
6 than 350 national and community organizations involved in support
7 of its mission. Volunteers assist patients by augmenting staff in
8 end-of-life care programs, foster care, community-based volunteer
9 programs, hospital wards, nursing homes, and veteran outreach
10 centers. AMVETS serves as one of the 60 major veteran, civic,
11 and service organizations that comprise the Veterans Affairs
12 Voluntary Service National Advisory Committee. Nationally, every
13 year, AMVETS volunteers provide nearly 200,000 hours of service
14 at VA facilities across the country through the volunteer program.
15 AMVETS volunteers have provided about \$3.5 million worth of
16 services each year helping to provide quality care to our nation's
17 heroes; and

18 WHEREAS, Team AMVETS operates six thrift stores in El
19 Cajon, Fresno, Spring Valley, Long Beach, Oakland, and San
20 Diego. These Team AMVETS Thrift Stores solicit donated goods
21 from the public, then pick up those goods and sell them to the
22 public to raise revenues to fund programs for veterans. Team
23 AMVETS Thrift Stores also give furniture and household goods
24 to homeless veterans seeking to transition into a home; and

25 WHEREAS, The AMVETS-National Youth Leadership
26 Conference is held annually at the Freedoms Foundation at Valley
27 Forge, where students get to experience four days at the Freedoms
28 Foundation's facility and are schooled in constitutional law with
29 respect to the balance between liberty and security. These students
30 participate in leadership building activities and visit sites in
31 Philadelphia and Valley Forge. TEAM AMVETS sends about 60
32 students each year to the conference from California; and

33 WHEREAS, The Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps
34 (JROTC), a federal program that seeks to instill in students
35 attending secondary educational institutions the values of
36 citizenship, service to the United States, and personal responsibility
37 and a sense of accomplishment, has faced funding challenges.
38 Team AMVETS has, in recognition of the value of this program,
39 sponsored JROTC scholarships, events, challenges, exhibitions,
40 drills, and competitions to augment the program; and

1 WHEREAS, Team AMVETS is continually searching for new
2 ways to serve veterans and their families, such as public policy
3 and legislative advocacy related to, among others, employment
4 and training, mandatory funding for government-provided health
5 care, and other entitlement benefits, as well as participating in
6 hospitalized veterans' visits, honor flights, Veterans Homes
7 assistance, scouting, stand-downs, blood drives, and patriotic
8 community programs; now, therefore, be it

9 *Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly*
10 *thereof concurring,* That Team AMVETS, since 1945, has
11 exhibited leadership, advocacy, and service for California's
12 veterans and their families; and be it further

13 *Resolved,* That the Legislature commends AMVETS Department
14 of California, also known as Team AMVETS, for providing
15 benefits and services to their fellow veterans, as well as playing
16 an important role in the civic life of their communities for 70 years;
17 and be it further

18 *Resolved,* That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of
19 this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.